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Early Western Travels  
1748-1846

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Volume XXIX







The Lodge Pole (Indian name);  
Great Chief of the Flat-heads.  
Victor (in baptism)

# Early Western Travels

## 1748-1846

A Series of Annotated Reprints of some of the best  
and rarest contemporary volumes of travel, de-  
scriptive of the Aborigines and Social and  
Economic Conditions in the Middle  
and Far West, during the Period  
of Early American Settlement ✓

Edited with Notes, Introductions, Index, etc., by

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Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition," "Hennepin's  
New Discovery," etc.

### Volume XXIX

Part II of Farnham's Travels in the Great Western Prairies,  
etc., October 21-December 4, 1839; and De Smet's  
Oregon Missions and Travels over the Rocky  
Mountains, 1845-1846



Cleveland, Ohio

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*Race*

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AND ROCKY MOUNTAINS, AND IN THE OREGON COUNTRY  
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edition, 1843.] *Thomas Jefferson Farnham.*

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PART II OF FARNHAM'S TRAVELS IN THE GREAT WESTERN  
PRAIRIES, ETC., OCTOBER 21-DECEMBER 4, 1839

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Reprint of chapter v of Volume II of original London edition, 1843



October 21, 1839

# TRAVELS IN THE GREAT WESTERN PRAIRIES, &c., &c.

## [PART II]

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### CHAPTER V<sup>1</sup>

Departure from Vancouver — Wappatoo Island — The Willamette River — Its Mouth — The Mountains — Falls — River above the Falls — Arrival at the Lower Settlement — A Kentuckian — Mr. Johnson and his Cabin — Thomas M'Kay and his Mill — Dr. Bailey and Wife and Home — The Neighbouring Farmers — The Methodist Episcopal Mission and Missionaries — Their Modes of Operations — The Wisdom of their Course — Their Improvements, &c. — Return to Vancouver — Mr. Young — Mr. Lee's Misfortune — Descent of the Willamette — Indians — Arrival at Vancouver — Oregon — Its Mountains, Rivers and Soil, and Climate — Shipment for the Sandwich Islands — Life at Vancouver — Descent of the Columbia — Astoria — On the Pacific Sea — The Last View of Oregon — Account of Oregon, by Lieut. Wilkes, Commander of the late exploring Expedition.

ON the morning of the 21st, I left the Fort and dropped down the Columbia, five miles, to Wappatoo Island. This large tract of low land is bounded on the south-west, south and south-east, by the mouths of the Willamette, and on the north by the Columbia. The side contiguous to the latter river is about fifteen miles in length; the side bounded by the eastern mouth of [201] the Willamette about seven miles, and that bounded by the western mouth of the same river about twelve miles. It derives its name from an edible root called *Wappatoo*, which it produces in abundance.<sup>2</sup> It is generally low, and, in the central parts broken with small ponds and marshes, in which

<sup>1</sup> Chapter v of volume ii of the original edition.— ED.

<sup>2</sup> For this island, now called Sauvie's, see our volume xxi, p. 300, notes 85, 86. The root is described in our volume vi, p. 278 note 87.— ED.

the water rises and falls with the river. Nearly the whole surface is overflowed by the June freshets. It is covered with a heavy growth of cotton-wood, elm, white-oak, black-ash, alder, and a large species of laurel, and other shrubs. The Hudson Bay Company, some years ago, placed a few hogs upon it, which have subsisted entirely upon roots, acorns, &c. and increased to many hundreds.

I found the Willamette deep enough for ordinary steam-boats, for the distance of twenty miles from its western mouth. One mile below the falls are rapids on which the water was too shallow to float our canoe. The tide rises at this place about fourteen inches. The western shore of the river, from the point where its mouths diverge to this place, consists of lofty mountains rising immediately from the water-side, and covered with pines. On the eastern side, beautiful swells and plains extend from the [202] Columbia to within five or six miles of the rapids. They are generally covered with pine, white-oak, black-ash, and other kinds of timber. From the point last named to the rapids, wooded mountains crowd down to the verge of the stream. Just below the rapids a very considerable stream comes in from the east. It is said to rise in a champaign country, which commences two or three miles from the Willamette, and extends eastward twenty or thirty miles to the lower hills of the President's range. This stream breaks through the mountain tumultuously, and enters the Willamette with so strong a current, as to endanger boats attempting to pass it.<sup>3</sup> Here were a number of Indian huts, the inmates of which were busied in taking and curing salmon. Between the rapids and the falls, the country adjacent to the river is similar to that just described; mountains clothed with impenetrable forests.

<sup>3</sup> The Clackamas River, for which see our volume xxi, p. 320, note 105.—ED.

The river, thus far, appeared to have an average width of four hundred yards, water limpid. As we approached the falls, the eastern shore presented a solid wall of basalt, thirty feet in perpendicular height. On the top of this wall was nearly an acre of level area, on which the Hudson Bay Company [203] have built a log-house.<sup>4</sup> This plain is three or four feet below the level of the water above the falls, and protected from the floods by the intervention of a deep chasm, which separates it from the rocks over which the water pours. This is the best site in the country for extensive flour and lumber-mills. The valley of the Willamette is the only portion of Oregon from which grain can ever, to any extent, become an article of export; and this splendid waterfall can be approached at all seasons, from above and below, by sloops, schooners, &c. The Hudson Bay Company, aware of its importance, have commenced a race-way, and drawn timber on the ground, with the apparent intention of erecting such works. On the opposite side is an acre or two of broken ground, which might be similarly occupied.

The falls are formed by a line of dark rock, which stretches diagonally across the stream. The river was low when I passed it, and all the water was discharged at three jets. Two of these were near the eastern shore; the other was near the western shore, and fell into the chasm which divides the rocky plain before named, from the cliffs of the falls. At the mouth of this chasm [204] my Indians unloaded their canoe, dragged it up the crags,

<sup>4</sup>The land at the Falls of the Willamette was a private possession of Dr. John McLoughlin, who took up the claim in 1829, making some improvements. His rights were first contested by members of the Methodist mission. Later, after he had become a naturalized American citizen, he was deprived thereof by legislative act—an injustice which was corrected in 1862, when the land was restored to the heirs of the estate. The town site at this place was platted as Oregon City (a name still retained), and for some years was the seat of government and metropolis of Oregon.—ED.



and having borne it on their shoulders eight or ten rods, launched it upon a narrow neck of water by the shore; reloaded, and rowed to the deep water above.

The scene, however, was too interesting to be left so soon, and I tarried awhile to view it. The cataract roared loudly among the caverns, and sent a thousand foaming eddies into the stream below. Countless numbers of salmon were leaping and falling upon the fretted waters; savages almost naked were around me, untrained by the soothing influences of true knowledge, and the hopes of a purer world; as rude as the rocks on which they trod; as bestial as the bear that growled in the thicket. On either hand was the primeval wilderness, with its decaying and perpetually-renewing energies; nothing could be more intensely interesting. I had passed but a moment in these pleasant yet painful reflections, when my Indians, becoming impatient, called me to pursue my voyage.

A mile above the falls a large creek comes in from the west. It is said to rise among the mountains near the Columbia, and to run south and south-east and eastwardly through a series of fine prairies, interspersed [205] with timber.<sup>5</sup> Above the falls, the mountains rise immediately from the water's edge, clothed with noble forests of pine, &c.; but at the distance of fifteen miles above, their green ridges give place to grassy and wooded swells on the west, and timbered and prairie plains on the eastern side. This section of the river appeared navigable for any craft that could float in the stream below the falls.

It was dark when I arrived at the level country; and

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<sup>5</sup>Tualatin River, draining the present Washington County, was a fertile valley early settled. About 1852 the river was by private enterprise made navigable for some distance.—ED.



emerging suddenly in sight of a fire on the western bank, my Indians cried "Boston! Boston!" and turned the canoe ashore to give me an opportunity of speaking with a fellow countryman. He was sitting in the drizzling rain, by a large log-fire — a stalwart six foot Kentucky trapper. After long service in the American Fur Companies, among the rocky mountains, he had come down to the Willamette, accompanied by an Indian woman and his child, selected a place to build his home, made an "improvement," sold it, and was now commencing another. He entered my canoe and steered across the river to a Mr. Johnson's.\* "I am sorry I can't keep you," said he, "but I reckon you'll sleep better under shingles, than this stormy sky. Johnson [206] will be glad to see you. He's got a good shantee, and something for you to eat."

We soon crossed the stream, and entered the cabin of Mr. Johnson. It was a hewn log structure, about twenty feet square, with a mud chimney, hearth and fireplace. The furniture consisted of one chair, a number of wooden benches, a rude bedstead covered with flag mats, and several sheet-iron kettles, earthen plates, knives and forks, tin pint cups, an Indian wife, and a brace of brown boys. I passed the night pleasantly with Mr. Johnson; and in the morning rose early to go to the Methodist Episcopal Mission, twelve miles above. But the old hunter detained me to breakfast; and afterwards insisted

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\*William Johnson, an English sailor who had deserted to the Americans, and served on the "Constitution" in the fight with the "Guerrière." He afterwards became a trapper in the Hudson's Bay service, and came to Oregon (1839) to settle with his native wife and family. He served as sheriff in the first provisional government. He appears later to have removed his claim to the lower Willamette, in the neighborhood of South Portland. According to Dr. McLoughlin's statement, *Oregon Historical Society Quarterly*, i, p. 197, he "left by sea and never returned to Oregon."—ED.

that I should view his premises, while his boy should gather the horses to convey me on my way. And a sight of fenced fields, many acres of wheat and oat-stubble, potato-fields, and garden-vegetables of all descriptions, and a barn well stored with the gathered harvest compensated me for the delay. Adjoining Mr. Johnson's farm were four others, on all of which there were from fifty to a hundred acres under cultivation, and substantial log-houses and barns.

One of these belonged to Thomas M'Kay, [207] son of M'Kay, who figured with Mr. Astor in the doings of the Pacific Fur Company.<sup>7</sup>

After surveying these marks of civilization, I found a Dr. Bailey waiting with his horses to convey me to his home. We accordingly mounted, bade adieu to the old trapper of Hudson Bay and other parts of the frozen north, and went to view M'Kay's mill. A grist-mill in Oregon! We found him working at his dam. Near by lay French burr stones, and some portions of substantial and well-fashioned iron work. The frame of the mill-house was raised and shingled; and an excellent structure it was. The whole expense of the establishment, when completed, is expected to be £1,400 or £1,600. M'Kay's mother is a Cree or Chippeway Indian; and M'Kay himself is a compound of the two races. The contour of his frame and features, is Scotch; his manners and intellects strongly tintured with the Indian. He has been in the service of the Fur Companies all his life, save some six or seven years past; and by his daring enterprise, and courage in battle has rendered himself the terror of the Oregon Indians.

Leaving M'Kay's mill, we travelled along a circuitous track through a heavy forest of fir and pine, and emerged

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<sup>7</sup> For Thomas McKay consult our volume xxi, p. 201, note 46. His father is noted in Franchère's *Narrative*, our volume vi, p. 186, note 9.—ED.

into a beautiful [208] little prairie, at the side of which stood the doctor's neat hewn log cabin, sending its cheerful smoke among the lofty pine tops in its rear. We soon sat by a blazing fire, and the storm that had pelted us all the way, lost its unpleasantness in the delightful society of my worthy host and his amiable wife. I passed the night with them. The doctor is a Scotchman, his wife a Yankee. The former had seen many adventures in California and Oregon and had his face very much slashed in a contest with the Shasty Indians near the southern border of Oregon. The latter had come from the States, a member of the Methodist Episcopal Mission, and had consented to share the bliss and ills of life with the adventurous Gael; and a happy little family they were.<sup>8</sup>

The next day Mrs. Bailey kindly undertook to make me a blanket coat by the time I should return, and the worthy doctor and myself started for the Mission. About a mile on our way, we called at a farm occupied by an American, who acted as blacksmith and gunsmith for the settlement. He appeared to have a good set of tools for his mechanical business, and plenty of custom. He had also a considerable tract of land under fence, and a comfortable house and [209] out-buildings. A mile or two farther on, we came upon the cabin of a Yankee tinker:<sup>9</sup> an odd fellow, this; glad to see a countryman, ready to serve him in any way, and to discuss the matter

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<sup>8</sup> Townsend was at Fort Vancouver when Bailey was brought in wounded, after his contest with the Rogue River Indians. See his *Narrative* in our volume xxi, pp. 328-330.

Mrs. Bailey was a Miss Margaret Smith, who came out in 1837 to reinforce the Methodist mission.—ED.

<sup>9</sup> The blacksmith and tinker were apparently Thomas J. Hubbard and Calvin Tibbitts, who came to Oregon with Wyeth. See for the former, W. H. Gray, *History of Oregon* (Portland, Oregon, 1870), pp. 191, 198; for the latter our volume xxi, p. 73, note 50. Both were instrumental in laying the foundations of the Oregon provisional government.—ED.

of a canal across the isthmus of Darien, the northern lights, English monopolies, Symmes's Hole, Tom Paine, and wooden nutmegs. Farther on, we came to the Catholic Chapel, a low wooden building, thirty-five or forty feet in length; and the parsonage, a comfortable log cabin.<sup>10</sup>

Beyond these, scattered over five miles of country, were fifteen or twenty farms, occupied by Americans and retired servants of the Hudson Bay Company. Twelve or thirteen miles from the doctor's we came in sight of the Mission premises. They consisted of three log cabins, a blacksmith's shop, and outbuildings, on the east bank of the Willamette, with large and well cultivated farms round about; and a farm, on which were a large frame house, hospital, barn, &c., half a mile to the eastward.<sup>11</sup> We alighted at the last-named establishment, and were kindly received by Dr. White and his lady. This gentleman is the physician of the Mission, and is thoroughly devoted to the amelioration of the physical condition of the natives.<sup>12</sup>

[210] For this object, a large hospital was being erected near his dwelling, for the reception of patients. I passed

<sup>10</sup> This mission was under the care of Father Blanchet, and was founded the year of Farnham's visit. It was located twelve miles above Champoege, on the east bank of the river. See De Smet's *Letters* in our volume xxvii, p. 320, note 164.—ED.

<sup>11</sup> For the founding and site of this mission see our volume xxi, p. 299, note 84. The school was later (about 1842) removed to Salem, and the headquarters established there.—ED.

<sup>12</sup> Dr. Elijah White, a native of New York state, came out as missionary physician in 1837. After serving about four years at the mission, he had some disagreement with its superintendent, and returned to the states. He then received the appointment at Washington of "sub-Indian agent for Oregon," an office with indeterminate duties, anomalous in character. Once more in Oregon, Dr. White was zealous in execution of the business of his office as he conceived it, but antagonized many of the settlers thereby and found himself in disfavor; so that upon visiting Washington in 1845 he was not able to secure the renewal of his appointment. He returned to Oregon, however, and in 1861 was employed as special Indian agent. In later life he removed to San Francisco where he died in March, 1879.—ED.

the night with the doctor and his family, and the following day visited the other Mission families. Every one appeared happy in his benevolent work.—Mr. Daniel Leslie, in preaching and superintending general matters;<sup>13</sup> Mr. Cyrus Shepard, in teaching letters to about thirty half-breed and Indian children; Mr. J. C. Whitecomb, in teaching them to cultivate the earth; and Mr. Alanson Beers, in blacksmithing for the mission and the Indians, and instructing a few young men in his art.<sup>14</sup> I spent four or five days with these people, and had a fine opportunity to learn their characters, the objects they had in view, and the means they took to accomplish them. They belong to that zealous class of Protestants called Methodist Episcopalians. Their religious feelings are warm, and accompanied with a strong faith and great activity. In energy and fervent zeal, they reminded me of the Plymouth pilgrims, so true in heart, and so deeply interested were they with the principles and emotions which they are endeavouring to inculcate upon those around

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<sup>13</sup> Rev. David (not Daniel) Leslie came to the Methodist mission with the second reinforcement of 1837. His ability was at once recognized, and during Jason Lee's absence he acted as superintendent. In 1838 at the request of the American settlers he served them as justice of the peace. The first meeting for a provisional government was held under his presidency (1841). Upon the dissolution of the mission he became a Methodist preacher, making his home in and about Salem, where he was chaplain of the first territorial legislature, and for many years president of the board of trustees of Willamette University. With the exception of a few months in the Sandwich Islands (1842-43), his life was practically spent in Oregon, where he was highly respected for the probity and purity of his character.—ED.

<sup>14</sup> J. L. Whitcomb came out in 1837 as a lay member of the mission. His duties were the superintendence of the farms. In 1842 he married the widow of Cyrus Shepard, and the same year, because of broken health, returned to the United States.

Alanson Beers, from Connecticut, also came (1837) as a lay member of the mission, and remained in Oregon until his death in 1853. He was one of the executive committee of three appointed by the provisional government, and treasurer of the board of trustees of Oregon Institute.—ED.

them. Their hospitality and friendship were [211] of the purest and most disinterested character. I shall have reason to remember long and gratefully the kind and generous manner in which they supplied my wants.

Their object in settling in Oregon I understood to be twofold; the one and principal, to civilize and christianize the Indians; the other, and not less important, the establishment of religious and literary institutions for the benefit of white emigrants. Their plan of operation on the Indians, is to learn their various languages, for the purposes of itinerant preaching, and of teaching the young the English language. The scholars are also instructed in agriculture, the regulations of a well-managed household, reading, writing, arithmetic and geography.

The principles and duties of the Christian religion form a very considerable part of the system. They have succeeded very satisfactorily in the several parts of their undertaking. The preachers of the Mission have traversed the wilderness, and by their untiring devotion to their work, wrought many changes in the moral condition of these proverbially debased savages; while with their schools they have afforded [212] them ample means for intellectual improvement.

They have many hundred acres of land under the plough, and cultivated chiefly by the native pupils. They have more than a hundred head of horned cattle, thirty or forty horses, and many swine. They have granaries filled with wheat, oats, barley, and peas, and cellars well stored with vegetables.

A site had already been selected on the opposite side of the river for an academical building; a court of justice had been organised by the popular voice; a military corps was about to be formed for the protection of settlers, and other measures were in progress, at once showing that



the American, with his characteristic energy and enterprize, and the philanthropist, with his holy aspirations for the improvement of the human condition, had crossed the snowy barrier of the mountain, to mingle with the dashing waves of the Pacific seas the sweet music of a busy and virtuous civilization.

During my stay here, several American citizens, unconnected with the Mission, called on me to talk of their fatherland, and inquire as to the probability that its [213] laws would be extended over them. The constantly repeated inquiries were —

“Why are we left without protection in this part of our country's domain? Why are foreigners permitted to domineer over American citizens, drive their traders from the country, and make us as dependent on them for the clothes we wear, as are their own apprenticed slaves?”

I could return no answer to these questions, exculpatory of this national delinquency, and therefore advised them to embody their grievances in a petition, and forward it to Congress. They had a meeting for that purpose, and afterwards put into my hand a petition, signed by sixty-seven citizens of the United States, and persons desirous of becoming such, the substance of which was, a description of the country, their unprotected situation, and, in conclusion, a prayer that the Federal Government would extend over them the protection and institutions of the Republic. Five or six of the Willamette settlers, for some reason, had not an opportunity to sign this paper. The Catholic priest refused to do it.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup>Farnham forwarded the petition to Congress from Honolulu, in January, 1840, accompanied by a letter of his own in which he sharply criticized the conduct of the Hudson's Bay Company — see *Senate Docs.*, 27 Cong., 3 sess., 102. The petition or memorial, which is largely the work of Farnham, was presented to the senate June 4, 1840, by Senator Lewis Linn of Missouri. It may be found

These people have put fifty or sixty fine [214] farms under cultivation in the Willamette valley, amidst the most discouraging circumstances. They have erected for themselves comfortable dwellings and outbuildings, and have herds of excellent cattle, which they have from time to time driven up from California, at great expense of property and even life. The reader will find it difficult to learn any sufficient reasons for their being left by the Government without the institutions of civilised society. Their condition is truly deplorable. They are liable to be arrested for debt or crime, and conveyed to the jails of Canada!<sup>16</sup>

For, in that case, the business of British subjects is interfered with, who, by way of retaliation, will withhold the supplies of clothing, household goods, &c., which the settlers have no other means of obtaining. Nor is this all. The civil condition of the territory being such as virtually to prohibit the emigration to any extent of useful and desirable citizens, they have nothing to anticipate from any considerable increase of their numbers,

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in *Senate Docs.*, 26 Cong., 1 sess., 514, signed "David Leslie and others;" *Cong. Globe*, 26 Cong., 1 sess., 440, reports seventy signers. The memorial requests Congress to establish a territorial government, notes that the British are, through the Hudson's Bay Company, granting lands, surveying harbors, bays, and rivers, cutting and shipping timber, and preparing to hold all the territory north of the Columbia. It describes the country south of that river as "of unequalled beauty and fertility," "a delightful and healthy climate," and "one of the most favored portions of the globe;" and concludes by praying for the "civil institutions of the American Republic," "the high privileges of American citizenship; the peaceful enjoyment of life; the right of acquiring, possessing, and using property; and the unrestrained pursuit of rational happiness."—ED.

<sup>16</sup> An act of parliament was passed (about 1837) at the instigation of Dr. McLoughlin, extending the jurisdiction and civil laws of Canada over the British subjects of Oregon territory. Under this law James Douglas was commissioned justice of the peace for criminal matters and for civil suits under £200 in value. Imprisonment was possible either in the forts of the Hudson's Bay Company or the jails of Canada.—ED.



nor any amelioration of their state to look for, from the accession of female society.

[215] In the desperation incident to their lonely lot, they take wives from the Indian tribes around them. What will be the ultimate consequence of this unpardonable negligence on the part of the Government upon the future destinies of Oregon cannot be clearly predicted; but it is manifest that it must be disastrous in the highest degree, both as to its claims to the sovereignty of that territory, and the moral condition of its inhabitants.

Mr. W. H. Wilson, superintendent of a branch mission on Puget's Sound, chanced to be at the Willamette station, whose polite attentions it affords me pleasure to acknowledge.<sup>17</sup> He accompanied me on many excursions in the valley, and to the heights, for the purpose of showing me the country. I was also indebted to him for much information relative to the Cowelitz and its valley, and the region about the sound, which will be found on a succeeding page.

My original intention had been to pass the winter in exploring Oregon, and to have returned to the States the following summer, with the American Fur traders. But having learned from various credible sources, that [216] little dependence could be placed upon meeting them at their usual place of rendezvous on Green river, and that the prospect of getting back to the States by that route would, consequently, be exceedingly doubtful, I felt constrained to abandon the attempt. My next

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<sup>17</sup> W. H. Wilson had in early life been a cooper on a whaling vessel. Having been converted to Methodism, he came out to Oregon in 1837 as a lay helper, and studied medicine with Dr. Elijah White. In 1840 he married Chloe A. Clark of the mission, who afterwards became first teacher of the Oregon Institute, of which her husband was for some time agent. They made their home in Salem, where he died suddenly of apoplexy. Wilson was the treasurer of the first provisional government of Oregon.—ED.

wish was to have gone by land to California, and thence home through the northern States of Mexico. In order, however, to accomplish this with safety, a force of twenty-five men was indispensable; and as that number could not be raised, I was compelled to give up all hopes of returning by that route.

The last and only practicable means then of seeking home during the next twelve months, was to go to the Sandwich Islands, and ship thence for New York or California, as opportunity might offer. One of the company's vessels was then lying at Vancouver, receiving a cargo of lumber for the Island market, and I determined to take passage in her. Under these circumstances, it behooved me to hasten my return to the Columbia. Accordingly, on the 20th I left the mission, visited Dr. Bailey and lady, and went to Mr. Johnson's to take a canoe down the river. On reaching this [217] place, I found Mr. Lee, who had been to the Mission establishment on the Willamette for the fall supplies of wheat, pork, lard, butter, &c., for his station of the "Dalles."

He had left the Mission two days before my departure, and giving his canoe, laden with these valuables, in charge of his Indians, proceeded to the highlands by land. He had arrived at Mr. Johnson's, when a message reached him to the effect that his canoe had been upset, and its entire contents discharged into the stream. He immediately repaired to the scene of this disaster, where I found him busied in attempting to save some part of his cargo. All the wheat, and a part of the other supplies, together with his gun and other paraphernalia, were lost. I made arrangements to go down with him when he should be ready, and left him to call upon a Captain Young, an American ex-trader, who was settled near. This gentleman had formerly explored California and Oregon in

quest of beaver — had been plundered by the Mexican authorities of £4,000 worth of fur; and, wearied at last with his ill-luck, settled nine or ten years ago on a small tributary of the Willamette coming in from the west.<sup>18</sup>

[218] Here he has erected a saw and grist mill, and opened a farm. He has been many times to California for cattle, and now owns about one hundred head, a fine band of horses, swine, &c. He related to me many incidents of his hardships, among which the most surprising was, that for a number of years, the Hudson Bay Company refused to sell him a shred of clothing; and as there were no other traders in the country, he was compelled during their pleasure to wear skins.<sup>19</sup> A false report that he had been guilty of some dishonourable act in California was the alleged cause for this treatment; but perhaps, a better reason would be, that Mr. Young occasionally purchased beaver skins in the American territory.

I spent the night of the 12th with the excellent old captain, and in the afternoon of the 13th, in company with my friend Mr. Lee, descended the Willamette as far as the Falls. Here we passed the night, more to the apparent satisfaction of vermin than of ourselves. These creature comforts abound in Oregon. But it was not these alone that made our lodging at the [219] Falls a rosy circumstance for memory's wastes. The mellifluent odour of salmon offal regaling our nasal sensibilities, and the squalling of a copper-coloured baby, uttered in all the sweetest intonations of such an instrument, falling with the liveliest notes upon the ear, made me dream of war to the knife, till the sun called us to our day's travel.

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<sup>18</sup> For Ewing Young see our volume xx, p. 23, note 2.— ED.

<sup>19</sup> The reader will take notice that this is an ex-parte statement.— ENGLISH EDITOR.

Five miles below the Falls, Mr. Lee and myself left the canoe, and struck across about fourteen miles to an Indian village on the bank of the Columbia opposite Vancouver. It was a collection of mud and straw huts, surrounded and filled with filth which might be smelt two hundred yards. We hired one of these cits to take us across the river, and at sunset of the 15th, were comfortably seated by the stove in "Bachelor's Hall" of Fort Vancouver.

The rainy season had now thoroughly set in. Traveling any considerable distance in open boats, or among the tangled underbrush on foot, or on horseback, was quite impracticable. I therefore determined to avail myself of whatever other means of information were in my reach; and as the gentlemen in charge of the various trading-posts [220] in the territory, had arrived at Vancouver to meet the express from London, I could not have had for this object a more favourable opportunity. The information obtained from these gentlemen, and from other residents in the country, I have relied on as correct, and combined it with my own observations in the following general account of Oregon.

Oregon Territory is bounded on the north by the parallel of 54 deg. 40 min. north latitude;<sup>20</sup> on the east by the Rocky Mountains; on the south by the parallel of 42 deg. north latitude; and on the west by the Pacific Ocean.

Mountains of Oregon. Different sections of the great chain of highlands which stretch from the straits of Magellan to the Arctic sea, have received different names — as the Andes, the Cordilleras, the Anahuac, the Rocky and the Chippewayan Mountains. The last mentioned appellation has been applied to that portion of it which lies between 58° of north latitude and the Arctic sea. The Hudson Bay Company, in completing the survey of the

<sup>20</sup>For the origin of this northern boundary, see our volume xxviii, note 1.—ED.

Arctic coast, have ascertained that these mountains preserve a strongly defined outline entirely to the sea, and hang in towering cliffs over it, [221] and by other surveys have discovered that they gradually increase in height from the sea southward.

The section to which the term Rocky Mountains has been applied, extends from latitude  $58^{\circ}$  to the Great Gap, or southern pass, in latitude  $42^{\circ}$  north. Their altitude is greater than that of any other range on the northern part of the continent. Mr. Thompson, the astronomer of the Hudson Bay Company, reports that he found peaks between latitudes  $53$  and  $56$  north, more than twenty-six thousand feet above the level of the sea.<sup>21</sup> That portion lying east of Oregon, and dividing it from the Great Prairie Wilderness, will be particularly noticed. Its southern point is in the Wind River cluster, latitude  $42^{\circ}$  north, and about seven hundred miles from the Pacific Ocean. Its northern point is in latitude  $54^{\circ} 40'$ , about seventy miles north of Mount Browne,<sup>22</sup> and about four hundred miles from the same sea. Its general direction between these points is from N. N. W. to S. S. E.

This range is generally covered with perpetual snows; and for this and other causes is generally impassable for man or beast. There are, however, several gaps through [222] which the Indians and others cross to the Great Prairie Wilderness. The northernmost is between the peaks Browne and Hooker. This is used by the fur

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<sup>21</sup> For David Thompson, a former North West explorer, see Franchère's *Narrative* in our volume vi, p. 253, note 61. Exclusive of the Alaskan mountains, there have been no peaks measured in the Rocky Mountain system exceeding 14,500 feet in height.—ED.

<sup>22</sup> Mount Brown is in British Columbia, about latitude  $52^{\circ} 28'$  north, not far from Athabasca Pass. It was formerly thought to be above 15,000 feet in height, but recent measurements have reduced it to less than 10 000.—ED.

traders in their journeys from the Columbia to Canada.<sup>23</sup> Another lies between the head waters of the Flathead and the Marias rivers. Another runs from Lewis and Clarke's river to the southern head waters of the Missouri. Another lies up Henry's fork for the Saptin, in a northeasterly course to the Big-horn branch of the Yellowstone. And still another, and most important of all, is situated between Wind river cluster and Long's mountains.<sup>24</sup>

There are several spurs or lateral branches protruding from the main chain, which are worthy of notice. The northernmost of these parts off north of Fraser's river, and embraces the sources of that stream. It is a broad collection of heights, thinly covered with pines. Some of the tops are covered with snow nine months of the year. A spur from these passes far down between Fraser's and Columbia rivers. This is a line of rather low elevations, thickly clothed with pines, cedar, &c. The highest portions of them lie near the Columbia. Another spur [223] puts out on the south of Mount Hooker, and lies in the bend of the Columbia, above the two lakes.

These are lofty and bare of vegetation. Another lies

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<sup>23</sup> This is Athabasca Pass, first discovered by David Thompson in 1811 — see Elliott Coues, *Henry-Thompson Journals* (New York, 1897), ii, pp. 668, 669. Mount Hooker lay south of the pass, and Mount Brown to the north; the former is about 10,500 feet above sea level (once supposed to be more than 15,000 feet). For a description of the passage of this gap see Franchère's *Narrative* in our volume vi, pp. 352-357.—ED.

<sup>24</sup> The first of these passes is now known as Maria's, and is that taken by the Great Northern Railway in crossing from Missouri waters to those of the Columbia. The second pass is probably intended to designate that taken by Lewis and Clark, who used not one, but several passes through the network of mountains in western Montana and eastern Idaho. The third is the pass from Henry's Lake to Red Rock, the source of the Jefferson (not of the Big Horn), over which De Smet went with the Indians — see his *Letters* in our volume xxvii, pp. 252, 253, notes 128, 130. The last is South Pass, for which see Wyeth's *Oregon* in our volume xxi, p. 58, note 37.—ED.



between the Flatbow and Flathead rivers; another between the Flathead and Spokane rivers; another between the Kooskooskie and Wapicakoos rivers.<sup>25</sup> These spurs, which lie between the head waters of the Columbia and the last mentioned river have usually been considered in connexion with a range running off S. W. from the lower part of the Saptin, and called the Blue Mountains. But there are two sufficient reasons why this is an error. The first is, that these spurs are separate and distinct from each other, and are all manifestly merely spurs of the Rocky Mountains, and closely connected with them.

And the second is, that no one of them is united in any one point with the Blue Mountains. They cannot therefore be considered a part of the Blue Mountain chain, and should not be known by the same name. The mountains which lie between the Wapicakoos river and the upper waters of the Saptin, will be described by saying that they are a vast cluster of dark naked heights, descending from the average elevation of fifteen thousand feet — the altitude of the [224] great western ridge — to about eight thousand feet — the elevation of the eastern wall of the valley of the Saptin. The only qualifying fact that should be attached to this description is, that there are a few small hollows among these mountains, called "holes;" which in general appearance resemble Brown's hole, mentioned in a previous chapter; but unlike the latter, they are too cold to allow of cultivation.

The last spur that deserves notice in this place is that which is called the "Snowy Mountains." It has already been described in this work; and it can only be necessary here to repeat that it branches off from the Wind river

<sup>25</sup> These spurs from the mountains are not definable. Farnham simply implies them from the watersheds. Upon many of the older maps the Kooskooskee (modern Clearwater) is also called Salmon — leaving to the modern Salmon River the name of Wapiacakoos (Waptacaca, Waptiacocos).— ED.

peak in latitude  $41^{\circ}$  north, and runs in an irregular broken line to Cape Mendocino, in Upper California.

The Blue Mountains are a range of heights which commence at the Saptin, about twenty miles above its junction with the Columbia, near the  $46^{\circ}$  of north latitude, and run south-westerly about two hundred miles, and terminate in a barren, rolling plain. They are separated from the Rocky Mountains by the valley of the Saptin, and are unconnected with any other range. Some of their loftiest peaks are more than ten thousand feet above the level of the sea. Many beautiful valleys, many hills covered [225] with bunch grass, and very many extensive swells covered with heavy yellow pine forests, are found among them.

The President's range is in every respect the most interesting in Oregon. It is a part of a chain of highlands, which commences at Mount St. Elias, and gently diverging from the coast, terminates in the arid hills about the head of the Gulf of California. It is a line of extinct volcanoes, where the fires, the evidences of whose intense power are seen over the whole surface of Oregon, found their principal vents. It has twelve lofty peaks; two of which, Mount St. Elias and Mount Fairweather, lie near latitude  $55^{\circ}$  north;<sup>26</sup> and ten of which lie south of latitude  $49^{\circ}$  north. Five of these latter have received names from British navigators and traders.

The other five have received from American travellers,

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<sup>26</sup>Mount St. Elias and Mount Fairweather belong to the Alaskan system, not to that of the Cascade or Presidents' Range, which properly ends at Puget Sound. Mount St. Elias, the highest mountain save one in North America (18,090 feet) was discovered by Vitus Behring in 1741. Its ascent was accomplished in the summer of 1897 by the Italian explorer, the Duke of Abruzzi.

Mount Fairweather, so named by the whalers, who predicted fair weather when the summit of this peak was free from clouds, has an altitude of 15,050 feet; it is located near Sitka, on the Alaskan coast.—ED.



and Mr. Kelly, the names of deceased Presidents of the Republic. Mr. Kelly, I believe, was the first individual who suggested a name for the whole range. For convenience in description I have adopted it.<sup>27</sup> And although it is a matter in which no one can find reasons for being very much interested, yet if there is any propriety in adopting Mr. Kelly's name for the whole [226] chain, there might seem to be as much in following his suggestion, that all the principal peaks should bear the names of those distinguished men, whom the suffrages of the people that own Oregon<sup>28</sup> have from time to time called to administer their national government. I have adopted this course.

Mount Tyler is situated near latitude forty-nine degrees north, and about twenty miles from the eastern shore of those waters between Vancouver's Island, and the continent. It is clad with perpetual snow.<sup>29</sup> Mount Harrison is situated a little more than a degree south of Mount Tyler, and about thirty miles east by north of Puget's Sound. It is covered with perpetual snow.<sup>30</sup> Mount Van Buren stands on the isthmus between Puget's Sound

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<sup>27</sup> For Hall J. Kelley see our volume xxi, p. 24, note 6. In his "Memoir" to Congress, *House Reports*, 25 Cong., 3 sess., 101, he says: "The eastern section of the district referred to is bordered by a mountain range, running nearly parallel to the spine of the Rocky mountains and to the coast, and which, from the number of its elevated peaks, I am inclined to call the Presidents' range."—ED.

<sup>28</sup> The reader will remember that our Author is an American.—ENGLISH ED.

<sup>29</sup> By Mount Tyler Farnham evidently intends Mount Baker, an extinct volcano in Whatcom County, Washington (altitude 10,827 feet), supposed to have shown symptoms of eruption as late as 1875. This peak was named by Vancouver (1792) for one of his officers. J. Q. Thornton, *Oregon and California* (New York, 1849), i, p. 256, calls this Mount Polk, and assigns the name of Tyler to "an elevation on the peninsula between Hood's Canal and the ocean."—ED.

<sup>30</sup> Evidently Mount Rainier, although incorrectly located, its distance and direction being somewhat deceptive. It is southeast (not northeast) of Puget Sound in Pierce County, Washington, the highest of the Cascade Range (14,526 feet). It was first noted by Vancouver in 1792, and named for a rear-admiral in the British navy. Its Indian name was Ta-ko-man, the white peak, hence its alternate name of Mount Tacoma.—ED.

and the Pacific. It is a lofty, wintry peak, seen in clear weather eighty miles at sea.<sup>31</sup> Mount Adams lies under the parallel of forty-five degrees, about twenty-five miles north of the cascades of the Columbia. This is one of the finest peaks of the chain, clad with eternal snows, five thousand feet down its sides. Mount Washington lies a little north of the forty-fourth degree north, and about twenty miles [227] south of the Cascades.<sup>32</sup> It is a perfect cone, and is said to rise seventeen thousand or eighteen thousand feet above the level of the sea. More than half its height is covered with perpetual snows. Mount Jefferson is an immense peak under latitude forty-one and a half degrees north. It received its name from Lewis and Clark.<sup>33</sup> Mount Madison is the Mount McLaughlin of the British fur-traders. Mount Monroe is in latitude forty-three degrees twenty minutes north, and Mount John Quincy Adams is in forty-two degrees ten minutes; both covered with perpetual snow.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Mount Olympus, in Jefferson County, Washington (latitude 47° 50' north, altitude 8,150 feet), was discovered originally by Perez (see our volume xxviii, p. 32, note 8), who named it Santa Rosalia. Captain John Meares (1785) bestowed its present appellation (see our volume vii, p. 112, note 17).—ED.

<sup>32</sup> In re-naming the Presidents' Range there appears to have been considerable confusion in assigning the name of the first executive. Kelley intended the name to be given to Mount St. Helens, which at first Farnham adopted (see *ante*, our volume xxviii, p. 353, note 221). C. G. Nicolay, *Oregon Territory* (London, 1846), p. 209, says that St. Helens was called Mount Washington. Nevertheless, Farnham here applies the name of Adams to Mount St. Helens, and that of Washington to Mount Hood, for which latter see Franchère's *Narrative* in our volume vi, p. 248, note 54. Franchère applied the title Washington to Mount Jefferson; it has been finally attached to a peak south of Jefferson, in Linn County, Oregon.—ED.

<sup>33</sup> Mount Jefferson, on the eastern borders of Linn County, a height crowned with perpetual snow, was first sighted by Lewis and Clark on March 30, 1806, from the mouth of Willamette River. In *Original Journals*, iv, p. 223, Clark says: "discovered a high mountain, S. E. covered with snow which we call Mt. Jefferson."—ED.

<sup>34</sup> Mount McLoughlin (Madison) is now called Diamond Peak; it is in the southeastern extremity of Lane County, and has an altitude of 8,807 feet.

Mount Jackson is in latitude forty-one degrees ten minutes. It is the largest and highest pinnacle of the President's range.<sup>35</sup> This chain of mountains runs parallel with the Rocky Mountains, between three hundred and four hundred miles from them. Its average distance from the coast of the Pacific, south of latitude forty-nine degrees, is about one hundred miles. The spaces between the peaks are occupied by elevated heights, covered with an enormous growth of the several species of pines, and firs, and the red cedar, many of which rise two hundred feet without a limb; and are five, six, seven, eight, and even nine fathoms in circumference at the ground.

[228] On the south side of the Columbia, at the Cascades, a range of low mountains puts off from the President's range, and running down parallel to the river, terminates in a point of land on which Astoria was built. Its average height is about one thousand five hundred feet above the river. Near the Cascades the tops are higher; and in some instances are beautifully castellated. They are generally covered with dense pine and fir forests. From the north side of the Cascades, a similar range runs down to the sea, and terminates in Cape Disappointment.<sup>36</sup> This range also is covered with forests. Another

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The mountain named for Monroe cannot now be definitely determined, because of confusion of nomenclature. It would seem from the latitude given by Kelley to have been intended for the present Mount Scott. Mount John Quincy Adams is the present Mount Pitt, which name was first assigned by the English to Mount Shasta; this, according to Thornton (*op. cit.* in note 29, *ante*), was also the Mount Monroe of the Americans. The term Mount Pitt is now applied to a volcanic peak (altitude 9,760 feet) on the borders of Jackson County, Oregon, eight miles west of Klamath Lake.—ED.

<sup>35</sup>Mount Shasta, of Siskiyou County, California, in latitude  $41^{\circ} 25'$  north. Next to Rainier, Shasta is the highest peak of the Cascades, attaining 14,380 feet in altitude, and being perpetually capped with snow.—ED.

<sup>36</sup>For Cape Disappointment see our volume vi, p. 233, note 36.—ED.

range runs on the brink of the coast, from Cape Mendocino in Upper California to the Straits de Fuca. This is generally bare of trees; mere masses of dark stratified rocks, piled many hundred feet in height. It rises immediately from the borders of the sea, and preserves nearly a right line course, during their entire length. The lower portion of the eastern sides is clothed with heavy pine and spruce, fir and cedar forests.

I have described in previous pages the great southern branch of the Columbia, called Saptin by the natives who live on its banks, and the valley of volcanic deserts, through which it runs, as well as the Columbia [229] and its cavernous vale, from its junction with the Saptin to Fort Vancouver, ninety miles from the sea. I shall therefore in the following notice of the rivers of Oregon, speak only of those parts of this and other streams, and their valleys about them, which remain undescribed.

That portion of the Columbia, which lies above its junction with the Saptin, latitude forty-six degrees eight minutes north, is navigable for bateaux to the boat encampment at the base of the Rocky Mountains, about the fifty-third degree of north latitude, a distance, by the course of the stream, of about five hundred miles.<sup>37</sup> The current is strong, and interrupted by five considerable and several lesser rapids, at which there are short portages. The country on both sides of the river, from its junction with the Saptin to the mouth of the Spokane, is a dreary waste. The soil is a light yellowish composition of sand and clay, generally destitute of vegetation. In a few nooks, irrigated by mountain streams, are found small patches of the short grass of the plains interspersed with another species which grows in tufts or bunches four or five feet

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<sup>37</sup> Boat Encampment, a noted place on the route to Canada, is described by Franchère in our volume vi, pp. 351, 352.—ED.

in height. A few shrubs (as the small willow, the sumac, and furze), appear in distant and solitary [230] groups. There are no trees; generally nothing green; a mere brown drifting desert; as far as the Oakanagan River, two hundred and eight miles, a plain, the monotonous desolation of which is relieved only by the noble river running through it, and an occasional cliff of volcanic rocks bursting through its arid surface.

The river Oakanagan is a large, fine stream, originating in a large lake of the same name situate in the mountains, about one hundred miles north of its mouth. The soil in the neighbourhood of this stream is generally worthless. Near its union, however, with the Columbia, there are a number of small plains tolerably well clothed with the wild grasses; and near its lake are found hills covered with small timber. On the point of land between this stream and the Columbia, the Pacific Fur Company in 1811 established a trading post. This in 1814 passed by purchase into the hands of the North-West Fur Company of Canada, and in 1819 by the union of that body with the Hudson Bay Company, passed into the possession of the united company under the name of Hudson Bay Company. It is still occupied by them under its old name of Fort Oakanagan.<sup>38</sup>

[231] From this post, latitude forty-eight degrees six minutes, and longitude one hundred and seventeen degrees west, along the Columbia to the Spokane, the country is as devoid of wood as that below. The banks of the river are bold and rocky, the stream is contracted with narrow

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<sup>38</sup> For a brief history of Fort Okanagan see our volume vi, p. 260, note 71. Alexander Ross had charge of this post for several years; see his descriptions in our volume vii, pp. 151-159, 198-207, 272-319. Afterward it became a Hudson's Bay post (in 1821, not 1819). See De Smet's visit to this region in our volume xxvii, p. 372, note 193.—ED.

limits, and the current strong and vexed with dangerous eddies.

The Spokane river rises among the spurs of the Rocky Mountains east south-east of the mouth of the Oakanagan, and, after a course of about fifty miles, forms the Pointed Heart Lake, twenty-five miles in length, and ten or twelve in width; and running thence in a north-westerly direction about one hundred and twenty miles, empties itself into the Columbia. About sixty miles from its mouth, the Pacific Fur Company erected a trading-post, which they called the "Spokan House." Their successors are understood to have abandoned it.<sup>39</sup> Above the Pointed Heart Lake, the banks of this river are usually high and bold mountains, sparsely covered with pines and cedars of a fine size. Around the lake are some grass lands, many edible roots, and wild fruits. On all the remaining course of the stream, are found at intervals [232] productive spots capable of yielding moderate crops of the grains and vegetables. There is considerable pine and cedar timber on the neighbouring hills; and near the Columbia are large forests growing on sandy plains. In a word, the Spokane valley can be extensively used as a grazing district; but its agricultural capabilities are limited.

Mr. Spaulding, an American missionary, made a journey across this valley to Fort Colville,<sup>40</sup> in March 1837, in relation to which, he thus writes to Mr. Levi Chamberlain of the Sandwich Islands: "The third day from home we came to snow, and on the fourth, came to what I call quick-

<sup>39</sup> For Spokane River, Lake Cœur d'Alène (Pointed Heart), and Spokane House, see De Smet's *Letters* in our volume xxvii, p. 366, note 185. See also Ross's *Oregon Settlers*, our volume vii, pp. 207-222; also his *Fur-Hunters of the Far West*, i, pp. 137-139.—ED.

<sup>40</sup> For H. H. Spaulding see our volume xxi, p. 352, note 125. Fort Colville is described in De Smet's *Letters*, our volume xxvii, p. 330, note 166.—ED.



sands, plains mixed with pine trees and rocks. The body of snow upon the plains was interspersed with bare spots under the standing pines. For these, our poor animals would plunge whenever they came near, after wallowing in the snow and mud until the last nerve seemed almost exhausted, naturally expecting a resting-place for their struggling limbs; but they were no less disappointed and discouraged, doubtless, than I was astonished, to see the noble animals go down by the side of a rock or pine tree, till their bodies struck the surface."

[233] The same gentleman, in speaking of this valley, and the country generally, lying north of the Columbia, and claimed by the United States and Great Britain, says, "It is probably not worth half the money and time that will be spent in talking about it."

The country, from the Spokane to Kettle Falls, is broken into hills and mountains thinly covered with wood, and picturesque in appearance, among which there is supposed to be no arable land. A little below Kettle Falls,<sup>41</sup> in latitude 48°, 37' is a trading post of the Hudson's Bay Company, called Fort Colville. Mr. Spaulding thus describes it:—"Fort Colville is two hundred miles west of north from this, (his station on the Clear Water), three days below Flatland River, one day above Spokane, one hundred miles above Oakanagan, and three hundred miles above Fort Wallawalla. It stands on a small plain of two thousand or three thousand acres, said to be the only arable land on the Columbia, above Vancouver. There are one or two barns, a blacksmith shop, a good flour mill, several houses for labourers, and good buildings for the gentlemen in charge."

"Mr. McDonald<sup>42</sup> raises this year (1837) [234] about

<sup>41</sup> For Kettle Falls see our volume vi, p. 346, note 153.—ED.

<sup>42</sup> For Archibald McDonald, see our volume xxi, p. 344, note 119.—ED.

three thousand five hundred bushels of different grains, such as wheat, peas, barley, oats, corn, buckwheat, &c., and as many potatoes; has eighty head of cattle, and one hundred hogs. This post furnishes supplies of provisions for a great many forts north, south and west. The country on both sides of the stream, from Kettle Falls to within four miles of the lower Lake, is covered with dense forests of pine, spruce, and small birch. The northwestern shore is rather low, but the southern high and rocky. In this distance are several tracts of rich bottom land, covered with a kind of creeping red clover, and the white species common to the States. The lower lake of the Columbia is about thirty-five miles in length, and four or five in breadth. Its shores are bold, and clad with a heavy growth of pine, spruce, &c.<sup>43</sup> From these waters the voyager obtains the first view of the snowy heights in the main chain of the Rocky Mountains.

The Flathead River enters into the Columbia a short distance above Fort Colville. It is as long, and discharges nearly as much water as that part of Columbia above their junction. It rises near the [235] sources of the Missouri and Saskatchewan.<sup>44</sup> The ridges which separate them are said to be easy to pass. It falls into the Columbia over a confused heap of immense rocks, just above the place where the latter stream forms the Kettle Falls, in its passage through a spur of the Rocky Mountains. About one hundred miles from its mouth, the Flathead River forms a lake thirty-six miles long and seven or eight wide. It is called Lake Kullerspelm. A rich and beautiful country spreads off from it in all directions, to the

<sup>43</sup> Now known as Lower Arrow Lake, an expansion of the Columbia many miles in length, between 49° and 50° of north latitude.—ED.

<sup>44</sup> For the Flathead River, as here intended (now known as Clark's Fork of the Columbia), see our volume vi, p. 348, note 155. Its sources are near those of the Missouri, not the Saskatchewan.—ED.



bases of lofty mountains covered with perpetual snows. Forty or fifty miles above this lake, is the "Flathead House," a trading post of the Hudson Bay Company.<sup>45</sup>

McGillivray's, or Flat Bow River, rises in the Rocky Mountains, and running a tortuous westerly course about three hundred miles, among the snowy heights, and some extensive and somewhat productive valleys, enters the Columbia four miles below the Lower Lake. Its banks are generally mountainous, and in some places covered with pine forests. On this stream also, the indefatigable British fur traders have a post, "Fort Kootania," situated [236] about one hundred and thirty miles from its mouth.<sup>46</sup> Between the lower and upper lakes of the Columbia, are "the Straits," a narrow, compressed passage of the river among jutting rocks. It is four or five miles in length, and has a current, swift, whirling, and difficult to stem. The upper lake is of less dimensions than the lower; but, if possible, surrounded by more broken and romantic scenery, forests overhung by lofty tiers of wintry mountains, from which rush a thousand torrents, fed by the melting snows.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>For Lake Pend d'Oreille (Kalispel, Kullerspel) see De Smet's *Letters* in our volume xxvii, p. 339, note 175.

Flathead House was built (November, 1809) by David Thompson, of the North West Company, and was maintained throughout the regime of the British fur-trade on the Northwest Coast. In 1824-25 Alexander Ross passed the winter there. It was a small fort tributary to Colville, and in charge usually of a trusted Canadian hunter or trapper. According to the report of 1854 it was situated east of Flathead Lake, on one of its smaller tributaries — *Senate Docs.*, 33 Cong., 2 sess., vii, no. 37.— Ed.

<sup>46</sup>This is the stream now known as Kootenai River, for which see our volume vi, p. 348, note 156. For the post of that name see our volume vii, p. 210, note 71. The small post was maintained on Kootenai River for nearly half a century. In 1854 it was reported as an inferior station, in charge of a Canadian as trader and postmaster.— Ed.

<sup>47</sup>For the passage of these straits and Upper Arrow Lake, see Franchère's *Narrative* in our volume vi, pp. 348, 349.— Ed.

Two miles above this lake, the Columbia runs through a narrow, rocky channel. This place is called the Lower Dalles. The shores are strewn with immense quantities of fallen timber, among which still stand heavy and impenetrable forests. Thirty-five miles above is the Upper Dalles; the waters are crowded into a compressed channel, among hanging and slippery rocks, foaming and whirling fearfully.<sup>48</sup> A few miles above this place, is the head of navigation, "The Boat encampment," where the traders leave their bateaux, in their overland journeys to Canada.<sup>49</sup> The country from the upper lake to this place, is a collection [237] of mountains, thickly covered with pine, and spruce, and fir trees of very large size.

Here commences the "Rocky Mountain portage," to the navigable waters on the other side. Its track runs up a wide and cheerless valley, on the north of which, tiers of mountains rise to a great height, thickly studded with immense pines and cedars, while on the south are seen towering cliffs, partially covered with mosses and stunted pines, over which tumble, from the ices above, numerous and noisy cascades. Two days' travel up the desolate valley, brings the traveller to "La Grande Cote," the principal ridge. This you climb in two hours. Around the base of this ridge, the trees, pines, &c., are of enormous size; but in ascending,<sup>50</sup> they decrease in size,

<sup>48</sup> The Canadian Pacific Railway crosses the Columbia at Revelstoke just above the Lower Dalles of the river. The Upper or Little Dalles shut in the river for about a mile; these narrows are now navigated by local steamers.—ED.

<sup>49</sup> The "few miles" is about one hundred and fifty, in which the river passes through an almost continuous cañon—navigable by canoes, however, save at Dalles des Morts (Narrows of the Dead), so named for the number of accidents occurring therein. The canoe voyage ended at the upper bend of the Columbia, where Canoe River enters from the north, the Columbia coming from the south-east.—ED.

<sup>50</sup> The trail follows an affluent of the Columbia known as Little Canoe (or Portage) River, leading to Athabasca Pass. See Franchère's description of the difficulties of the passage in our volume vi, pp. 352-354.—ED.

till on the summit they become little else than shrubs.

On a table land of this height, are found two lakes a few hundred yards apart; the waters of one of which flow down the valley just described, to the Columbia, and thence to the North Pacific; while those of the other, forming the Rocky Mountain River, run thence into the Athabasca, and thence through Peace River, the Great Slave Lake, [238] and McKenzie's River, into the Northern Arctic Ocean. The scenery around these lakes is highly interesting.<sup>51</sup> In the north, rises Mount Browne, sixteen thousand feet, and in the south, Mount Hooker, fifteen thousand seven hundred feet above the level of the sea. In the west, descends a vast tract of secondary mountains, bare and rocky, and noisy with tumbling avalanches. In the vales are groves of the winter-loving pine. In the east roll away undulations of barren heights beyond the range of sight. It seems to be the very citadel of desolation; where the god of the north wind elaborates his icy streams, and frosts, and blasts, in every season of the year.

Frazer's River rises between latitudes 55° and 56° north, and after a course of about one hundred and fifty miles, nearly due south, falls into the Straits de Fuca, under latitude 49° north. It is so much obstructed by rapids and falls, as to be of little value for purposes of navigation.<sup>52</sup> The face of the country about its mouth, and

<sup>51</sup> For these lakes see our volume vi, p. 353, note 163.—ED.

<sup>52</sup> Fraser's River, the largest stream wholly within the limits of British Columbia, rises near the source of the upper branch (Canoe River) of the Columbia, flows northwest for a hundred and ninety miles, and then turns abruptly south until at about latitude 49° 20' north it bends west into the Strait of Georgia. Sir Alexander Mackenzie was upon its upper waters in 1793. The whole course of the river was explored by Simon Fraser (1808), who until he reached the river's mouth supposed that he was upon the Columbia. See his "Journal" in L. R. Masson, *Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord Ouest* (Quebec, 1889), i, pp. 155-221.—ED.

for fifty miles above, is mountainous and covered with dense forests of white pine, cedar, and other evergreen trees. The soil is an indifferent vegetable deposit six or seven inches in depth, resting on a stratum of sand or [239] coarse gravel. The whole remaining portion of the valley is said to be cut with low mountains running north-westwardly and south-eastwardly; among which are immense tracts of marshes and lakes, formed by cold torrents from the heights that encircle them. The soil not thus occupied, is too poor for successful cultivation. Mr. Macgillivray, the person in charge at Fort Alexandria, in 1827, says:<sup>53</sup> "All the vegetables we planted, notwithstanding the utmost care and precaution, nearly failed; and the last crop of potatoes did not yield one-fourth of the seed planted." The timber of this region consists of all the varieties of the fir, the spruce, pine, poplar, willow, cedar, cyprus, birch and alder.

The climate is very peculiar. The spring opens about the middle of April. From this time the weather is delightful till the end of May. In June the south wind blows, and brings incessant rains. In July and August the heat is almost insupportable. In September the whole valley is enveloped in fogs so dense, that objects one hundred yards distant cannot be seen till ten o'clock in the day. In October the leaves change their colour and begin to fall. In November, the lakes, and portions of the rivers are [240] frozen. The winter months bring snow. It

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<sup>53</sup> Probably Joseph McGillivray, for whom see our volume vi, p. 346, note 152. Fort Alexandria, on Fraser River, was built (1821) on the east bank of the stream to serve as a supply post, transmitting goods from the Columbia country. It was placed at the point where Sir Alexander Mackenzie turned back (1793), and was named in his honor. In 1836 the fort was removed to the west bank of the river. With varying fortunes the post has ever since been maintained; in 1863 a wagon road was opened as far as Alexandria to accommodate the inrush of miners.—ED.

is seldom severely cold. The mercury in Fahrenheit's scale sinks a few days only, as low as ten or twelve degrees below zero.

That part of Oregon bounded on the north by Shmilla-men River,<sup>54</sup> and on the east by Oakanagan and Columbia Rivers, south by the Columbia, and west by the President's Range, is a broken plain, partially covered with the short and bunch grasses; but so destitute of water, that a small portion only of it, can ever be depastured. The eastern and middle portions of it are destitute of timber — a mere sunburnt waste. The northern part has a few wooded hills and streams, and prairie valleys. Among the lower hills of the President's Range, too, there are considerable pine and fir forests; and rather extensive prairies, watered by small mountain streams; but nearly all of the whole surface of this part of Oregon, is a worthless desert.

The tract bounded north by the Columbia, east by the Blue Mountains, south by the forty-second parallel of north latitude, and west by the President's Range, is a plain of vast rolls or swells, of a light, yellowish, sandy clay, partially covered with the short and bunch grasses, mixed with the prickly [241] pear and wild wormwood. But water is so very scarce, that it can never be generally fed; unless, indeed, as some travellers, in their praises of this region, seem to suppose, the animals that usually live by eating and drinking, should be able to dispense with the latter, in a climate where nine months in the year, not a particle of rain or dew falls, to moisten a soil as dry and loose as a heap of ashes. On the banks of the Luhon, John Days, Umatalla, and Wallawalla Rivers <sup>55</sup>

<sup>54</sup> For the Similkameen River see our volume vii, p. 206, note 67.— ED.

<sup>55</sup> For the Luhon (Lowhum, now Des Chutes) and John Day rivers see our volume vii, p. 133, notes 32, 33; for the Umatilla and Walla Walla, volume vi, p. 338, notes 141, 142.— ED.

— which have an average length of thirty miles — without doubt, extensive tracts of grass may be found in the neighbourhood of water; but it is also true that not more than a fifth part of the surface within twenty-five miles of these streams, bears grass or any other vegetation.

The portion also which borders the Columbia, produces some grass. But of a strip six miles in width, and extending from the Dalles to the mouth of the Saptin, not an hundredth part bears the grasses; and the sides of the chasm of the river are so precipitous, that not a fiftieth part of this can be fed by animals which drink at that stream. In proceeding southward on the head waters of the small streams, John Days and Umatalla, the face of the plain rises gradually [242] into vast irregular swells, destitute of timber and water. On the Blue Mountains are a few pine and spruce trees of an inferior growth. On the right tower the white peaks and thickly wooded hills of the President's Range.

The space south-east of the Blue Mountains is a barren, thirsty waste, of light, sandy, and clayey soil — strongly impregnated with nitre. A few small streams run among the sand hills; but they are so strongly impregnated with various kinds of salts, as to be unfit for use. These brooks empty themselves into the lakes, the waters of which are salter than the ocean. Near latitude  $43^{\circ}$  north, the Klamet River rises and runs westerly, through the President's Range.<sup>56</sup> On these waters are a few productive valleys;

<sup>56</sup> Klamath River rises in southern Oregon, in the county of the same name, flows through Klamath lakes and breaks through the barrier of the Cascades about on the California boundary line. Thence flowing in a somewhat irregular course, it receives tributaries from Shasta and Siskiyou mountains, and enters the ocean in Del Norte County, California. It is about two hundred and seventy-five miles long, and navigable for about forty miles from its mouth. Gold and timber are found on its banks.—ED.



westwardly from them to the Saptin the country is dry and worthless.

The part of Oregon lying between the Straits de Fuca on the north, the President's Range on the east, the Columbia on the south, and the ocean on the west, is thickly covered with pines, cedars, and firs of extraordinary size; and beneath these, a growth of brush and brambles which defies the most vigorous foot to penetrate. Along the banks of the Columbia, indeed, strips [243] of prairie may be met with, varying from a few rods to three miles in width, and often several miles in length; and even amidst the forests are found a few open spaces.

The banks of the Cowelitz, too, are denuded of timber for forty miles; and around the Straits de Fuca and Puget's Sound, are large tracts of open country.<sup>57</sup> But the whole tract lying within the boundaries just defined, is of little value except for its timber. The forests are so heavy and so matted with brambles, as to require the arm of a Hercules to clear a farm of one hundred acres in an ordinary life-time; and the mass of timber is so great that an attempt to subdue it by girdling would result in the production of another forest before the ground could be disencumbered of what was thus killed. The small prairies among the woods are covered with wild grasses, and are useful as pastures.

The soil of these, like that of the timbered portions, is a vegetable mould, eight or ten inches in thickness, resting on a stratum of hard blue clay and gravel. The valley of the Cowelitz is poor — the soil, thin, loose, and much washed, can be used as pasture grounds for thirty miles up the stream. At about that distance some tracts [244] of fine land occur. The prairies on the banks of

<sup>57</sup> For the Cowelitz River see our volume vi, p. 245, note 49. For Juan de Fuca Strait, *ibid.*, p. 256, note 64.—ED.

the Columbia would be valuable land for agricultural purposes, if they were not generally overflowed by the freshets in June — the month of all the year when crops are most injured by such an occurrence. It is impossible to dyke out the water; for the soil rests upon an immense bed of gravel and quicksand, through which it will leach in spite of such obstructions.

The tract of the territory lying between the Columbia on the north, the President's range on the east, the parallel of forty-two degrees of north latitude on the south, and the ocean on the west, is the most beautiful and valuable portion of the Oregon Territory. A good idea of the form of its surface may be derived from a view of its mountains and rivers as laid down on the map. On the south tower the heights of the snowy mountains; on the west the naked peaks of the coast range; on the north the green peaks of the river range; and on the east the lofty shining cones of the President's range — around whose frozen bases cluster a vast collection of minor mountains, clad with the mightiest pine and cedar forests on the face of the earth! The principal rivers are the Klamet and the Umpqua in the south-west, and the Willamette in the north.

[245] The Umpqua enters these in a latitude forty-three degrees, thirty minutes north.<sup>58</sup> It is three-fourths of a mile in width at its mouth; water two-and-a-half fathoms on its bar; the tide sets up thirty miles from the sea; its banks are steep and covered with pines and cedars, &c. Above tide water the stream is broken by rapids and falls. It has a westwardly course of about one hundred miles. The face of the country about it is somewhat broken; in some parts covered with heavy pine and cedar timber, in others with grass only; said to be a fine valley for cultivation and pasturage. The pines on this

<sup>58</sup> The Umpqua is noted in our volume vii, p. 231, note 82.— ED.



river grow to an enormous size: two hundred and fifty feet in height — and from fifteen to more than fifty feet in circumference;<sup>59</sup> the cones or seed vessels are in the form of an egg, and oftentimes more than a foot in length; the seeds are as large as the castor bean. Farther south is another stream, which joins the ocean twenty-three miles from the outlet of the Umpqua. At its mouth are many bays; and the surrounding country is less broken than the valley of the Umpqua.<sup>60</sup>

[246] Farther south still, is another stream called the Klamet. It rises, as is said, in the plain east of Mount Madison, and running a westerly course of one hundred and fifty miles, enters the ocean forty or fifty miles south of the Umpqua. The pine and cedar disappear upon this stream; and instead of them are found a myrtaceous tree of small size, which, when shaken by the least breeze, diffuses a delicious fragrance through the groves. The face of the valley is gently undulating, and in every respect desirable for cultivation and grazing.

The Willamette rises in the President's range, near the sources of the Klamet. Its general course is north north-west. Its length is something more than two hundred miles. It falls into the Columbia by two mouths; the one eighty-five, and the other seventy miles from the sea. The arable portion of the valley of this river is about one hundred and fifty miles long, by sixty in width. It is bounded on the west by low wooded hills of the coast range; on the south by the highlands around the upper waters of the Umpqua; on the east by the President's

<sup>59</sup> This appears extravagant, but the fact cannot be disputed. It may be observed, however, that the wood, from its rapid growth, has but little weight — half that of the common pine or deal.— ENGLISH ED.

<sup>60</sup> The Coquille River, which rises in several branches among the Coast Mountains and enters the ocean at Coos Bay, in the county of that name. It is navigable for small steamers for over thirty miles from its mouth.— ED.

range; and on the north by the mountains that run along the southern bank of the Columbia. Its general appearance as seen from the heights, is that of a [247] rolling, open plain, intersected in every direction by ridges of low mountains, and long lines of evergreen timber; and dotted here and there with a grove of white oaks. The soil is a rich vegetable mould, two or three feet deep, resting on a stratum of coarse gravel or clay. The prairie portions of it are capable of producing, with good cultivation, from twenty to thirty bushels of wheat to the acre, and other small grains in proportion. Corn cannot be raised without irrigation. The vegetables common to such latitudes yield abundantly, and of the best quality. The uplands have an inferior soil, and are covered with such an enormous growth of pines, cedars and firs, that the expense of clearing would be greatly beyond their value. Those tracts of the second bottom lands, which are covered with timber might be worth subduing, but for a species of fern growing on them, which is so difficult to kill, as to render them nearly worthless for agricultural purposes.

The climate of the country between the President's range and the sea, is very temperate. From the middle of April to the middle of October, the westerly winds prevail, and the weather is warm and dry. Scarcely a drop of rain falls. During the remainder of the year, the southerly winds [248] blow continually, and bring rains; sometimes in showers, and at others terrible storms, which continue to pour down incessantly for many weeks.

There is scarcely any freezing weather in this section of Oregon. Twice within the last forty years the Columbia has been frozen over; but this was chiefly caused by the accumulation of ice from the upper country. The grasses grow during the winter months, and wither to hay in the summer time.

The mineral resources of Oregon have not been investigated. Great quantities of bituminous coal have however been discovered on Puget's Sound,<sup>61</sup> and on the Willamette. Salt springs also abound; and other fountains highly impregnated with sulphur, soda, iron, &c., are numerous.

Many wild fruits are to be met with in the territory, that would be very desirable for cultivation in the gardens of the States. Among these are a very large and delicious strawberry, the service berry, a kind of whortleberry, and a cranberry growing on bushes four or five feet in height. The crab apple, choke cherry, and thornberry are common. Of the wild animals, there are the white tailed, black tailed, jumping and moose deer; the elk; red and black and grey wolf; the black, brown, and grisly bear; [249] the mountain sheep; black, white, red and mixed foxes; beaver, lynxes, martin, otters, minks, muskrats, wolverines, marmot, ermines, wood-rats, and the small curly-tailed short eared dog, common among the Chippeways.

Of the feathered tribe, there are the goose, the brant, several kinds of cranes, the swan, many varieties of the duck, hawks of several kinds, plovers, white eagles, ravens, crows, vultures, thrush, gulls, woodpeckers, pheasants, pelicans, partridges, grouse, snowbirds, &c.

In the rivers and lakes are a very superior quality of salmon, brook and salmon trout, sardines, sturgeon, rock cod, the hair seal, &c.; and in the bays and inlets along the coast, are the sea otter and an inferior kind of oyster.

The trade of Oregon is limited entirely to the operations of the British Hudson Bay Company. A concise

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<sup>61</sup> Coal was first exported from Washington in 1854; no more was mined until 1870, when the Seattle shafts were opened. Washington is known as the "Pennsylvania of the West" for the number and extent of its coal fields.—ED.

account of this association is therefore deemed apposite in this place.

A charter was granted by Charles II, in 1670, to certain British subjects associated under the name of "The Hudson's Bay Company," in virtue of which they were allowed the exclusive privilege of establishing [250] trading factories on the Hudson's Bay and its tributary rivers. Soon after the grant, the Company took possession of the territory, and enjoyed its trade without opposition till 1787; when was organized a powerful rival under the title of the "North American Fur Company of Canada." This company was chiefly composed of Canadian-born subjects — men whose native energy and thorough acquaintance with the Indian character, peculiarly qualified them for the dangers and hardships of a fur trader's life in the frozen regions of British America. Accordingly we soon find the North-westers outreaching in enterprise and commercial importance their less active neighbours of Hudson's Bay; and the jealousies naturally arising between parties so situated, led to the most barbarous battles, and the sacking and burning each others posts. This state of things in 1821, arrested the attention of Parliament, and an act was passed consolidating the two companies into one, under the title of "The Hudson's Bay Company."<sup>62</sup>

This association is now, under the operation of their charter, in sole possession of all that tract of country bounded north by [251] the northern Arctic Ocean; east by the Davis' Straits and the Atlantic Ocean; south and south-westwardly by the northern boundary of the Cana-

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<sup>62</sup> On the organization and career of the North West Company see J. Long's *Voyages* in our volume ii, preface, pp. 15, 16. The difficulties with the Hudson's Bay Company are briefly recounted by Franchère in our volume vi, pp. 379-381, particularly notes 195, 199.—ED.

das, and a line drawn through the centre of Lake Superior; thence north-westwardly to the Lake of the Wood; thence west on the 49th parallel of north latitude to the Rocky Mountains, and along those mountains to the 54th parallel; thence westwardly on that line to a point nine marine leagues from the Pacific Ocean; and on the west by a line commencing at the last mentioned point, and running northwardly parallel to the Pacific coast till it intersects the 141st parallel of longitude west from Greenwich, England, and thence due north to the Arctic Sea.

They have also leased for twenty years, commencing in March, 1840, all of Russian America, except the post of Sitka; the lease renewable at the pleasure of the Hudson's Bay Company.<sup>63</sup> They are also in possession of Oregon under treaty stipulation between Britain and the United States. Thus this powerful company occupy and control more than one-ninth of the soil of the globe. Its stockholders are British capitalists, resident in Great Britain. From these are elected a board of managers, who [252] hold their meetings and transact their business at "The Hudson's Bay House" in London. This board buy goods and ship them to their territory, sell the furs for which they are exchanged, and do all other business connected with the Company's transactions, except the execution of their own orders, the actual business of collecting furs in their territory. This duty is entrusted to a class of men who are called partners, but who in fact receive certain portions of the annual

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<sup>63</sup> This lease was the result of a protest from Great Britain to the government of Russia for the attack by the latter upon a British brig entering the Stikkeen River to found a fort. The Hudson's Bay Company waived its claim for damages in virtue of this lease of the mainland of Russian America between Cape Spencer and 54° 40' north latitude. After being several times renewed, the lease expired in 1868 upon the purchase of Alaska by the United States.—ED.

net profits of the Company's business, as a compensation for their services.

These gentlemen are divided by their employers into different grades. The first of these is the Governor-General of all the Company's posts in North America. He resides at York Factory, on the west shore of Hudson's Bay.<sup>64</sup> The second class are chief factors; the third, chief traders; the fourth, traders. Below these is another class, called clerks. These are usually younger members of respectable Scottish families. They are not directly interested in the Company's profits, but receive an annual salary of £100, food, suitable clothing, and a body servant, during an apprenticeship of seven years. At the expiration [253] of this term they are eligible to the traderships, factorships, &c. that may be vacated by death or retirement from the service. While waiting for advancement they are allowed from £80 to £120 per annum. The servants employed about their posts and in their journeyings are half-breed Iroquois and Canadian Frenchmen. These they enlist for five years, at wages varying from £68 to £80 per annum.<sup>65</sup>

An annual Council composed of the Governor-General, chief factors and chief traders, is held at York Factory. Before this body are brought the reports of the trade of each district; propositions for new enterprises, and modifications of old ones; and all these and other matters deemed important, being acted upon, the proceedings had thereon and the reports from the several districts are forwarded to the Board of Directors in London, and subjected to its final order.

<sup>64</sup> See our volume vi, p. 377, note 191, for a description of York Factory.—ED.

<sup>65</sup> For further details of the system of the Hudson's Bay Company see A. G. Morice, *History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia, formerly New Caledonia* (Toronto, 1904), pp. 99-116; also George Bryce, *Remarkable History of Hudson's Bay Company* (Toronto, 1900).—ED.



This shrewd Company never allow their territory to be overtrapped. If the annual return from any well trapped district be less in any year than formerly, they order a less number still to be taken, until the beaver and other fur-bearing animals have time to increase. The income of the company [254] is thus rendered uniform, and their business perpetual.

The nature and annual value of the Hudson Bay Company's business in the territory which they occupy, may be learned from the following table, extracted from Bliss's work on the trade and industry of British America, in 1831:<sup>66</sup>

Skins.	No.	each	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.
Beaver .....	126,944	"	1	5	0	158,680	0	0
Muskrat .....	375,731	"	0	0	6	9,393	5	6
Lynx .....	58,010	"	0	8	0	23,204	0	0
Wolf .....	5,947	"	0	8	0	2,378	16	0
Bear .....	3,850	"	1	0	0	3,850	0	0
Fox .....	8,765	"	0	10	0	4,382	10	0
Mink .....	9,298	"	0	2	3	929	16	0
Raccoon .....	325	"	0	1	6	24	7	6
Tails .....	2,290	"	0	1	0	114	10	0
Wolverine .....	1,744	"	0	3	0	261	12	0
Deer .....	645	"	0	3	0	96	15	0
Weasel .....	34	"	0	0	6	00	16	0
						<hr/>		
						£203,316 9 0		

Some idea may be formed of the net profit of this business, from the facts that the shares of the company's stock, which originally cost £100, are at 100 per cent premium, and that the dividends range from ten per cent upward, and this too while they are creating out of the net proceeds

<sup>66</sup> Henry Bliss, *The Colonial System: Statistics of the trade, industry and resources of Canada and other Plantations in British America* (London, 1833, not 1831).—ED.

an immense reserve fund, to be [255] expended in keeping other persons out of the trade.

In 1805 the Missouri Fur Company established a trading-post on the headwaters of the Saptin.<sup>67</sup> In 1806 the North-West Fur Company of Canada established one on Frazer's Lake, near the northern line of Oregon.<sup>68</sup> In March, 1811, the American Pacific Fur Company built Fort Astoria, near the mouth of the Columbia.<sup>69</sup> In July of the same year, a partner of the North-West Fur Company of Canada descended the great northern branch of the Columbia to Astoria. This was the first appearance of the British fur traders in the valleys drained by this river.<sup>70</sup>

On the 16th of October, 1813, (while war was raging between England and the States) the Pacific Fur Company sold all its establishments in Oregon to the North-West Fur Company of Canada. On the 1st of December following, the British sloop of war *Raccoon*, Captain Black commanding, entered the Columbia, took formal possession of Astoria, and changed its name to Fort George.<sup>71</sup> On the 1st of October, 1818, Fort George was surrendered

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<sup>67</sup> Andrew Henry, one of the partners of the Missouri Fur Company, in the autumn of 1810 built a post on the north fork of Lewis or Snake (Saptin) River. This was maintained only until the following spring, but is renowned for being the first American trading post on Columbian waters. The site was supposedly near Egin, Idaho, and the stream has since been known as Henry's Fork.—ED.

<sup>68</sup> The North West Company decided (1805) to explore the region west of the Rockies and commissioned Simon Fraser to undertake it. In 1805 he built Fort McLeod, the first post in British Columbia. The next summer saw the establishment of two posts—St. James on Stuart Lake, and Fraser on Lake Fraser. Fort Fraser was begun by John Stuart and has been maintained until the present time.—ED.

<sup>69</sup> For the Astorian enterprise see our volumes v-vii.—ED.

<sup>70</sup> David Thompson, for whose arrival at Astoria see Franchère's *Narrative* in our volume vi, pp. 252-255.—ED.

<sup>71</sup> See Ross's *Oregon Settlers* in our volume vii, pp. 244-249.—ED



by the British Government to the Government of the States, according to a stipulation in the Treaty of Ghent.<sup>72</sup>

[256] By the same treaty, British subjects were granted the same rights of trade and settlement in Oregon as belonged to the citizens of the Republic, for the term of ten years; under the condition, that as both nations claimed Oregon the occupancy thus authorized should in no form affect the question as to the title to the country. This stipulation was by treaty of London, August 6, 1827, indefinitely extended; under the condition that it should cease to be in force twelve months from the date of a notice of either of the contracting powers to the other, to annul and abrogate it; provided such notice should not be given till after the 20th of October, 1828.<sup>73</sup> And this is the manner in which the British Hudson's Bay Company, after its union with the North-West Fur Company of Canada, came into Oregon.

They have now in the territory the following trading posts: Fort Vancouver, on the north bank of the Columbia, ninety miles from the Ocean, in latitude  $45\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ , longitude  $122^{\circ} 30'$ ; Fort George, (formerly Astoria), near the mouth of the same river;<sup>74</sup> Fort Nasqually, on Puget's Sound, latitude  $47^{\circ}$ ; Fort Langly, at the outlet of Fraser's

<sup>72</sup> See our volume xxviii, p. 38, note 18.—ED.

<sup>73</sup> The joint occupancy of Oregon was not determined by the provisions of the Treaty of Ghent, but by a separate convention made (1818) at London. The renewal occurred as Farnham states, by the convention of 1827 signed at London by Albert Gallatin on the part of the United States, and Charles Grant and Henry U. Addington for Great Britain; see *Treaties and Conventions between the United States and Other Powers* (Washington, 1889), pp. 415-418, 426, 427.—ED.

<sup>74</sup> For Fort Vancouver see our volume xxi, p. 297, note 82; the early history of Fort George is narrated in our volume vi, p. 241, note 42. After the headquarters of the fur company were withdrawn from Fort George, it was maintained chiefly as a post of observation to report incoming vessels; a single clerk lived at this place, raised vegetables and flowers in his garden, and welcomed travellers. The foundations of Fort George were visible at Astoria as late as 1870, but are now entirely built over.—ED.

River, latitude  $49^{\circ} 25'$ ; Fort McLaughlin, on the Millbank Sound, latitude  $52^{\circ}$ ; <sup>75</sup> Fort [257] Simpson, on Dundas Island, latitude  $54\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ . <sup>76</sup> Frazer's Fort, Fort James, McLeod's Fort, Fort Chilcotin, and Fort Alexandria, on Frazer's river and its branches between the  $51^{\text{st}}$  and  $54\frac{1}{2}$  parallels of latitude; <sup>77</sup> Thompson's Fort,

<sup>75</sup> For Fort Nisqually see De Smet's *Letters* in our volume xxvii, p. 386, note 203. Fort Langley was founded in 1827 upon the north bank of the Fraser, not far from the mouth; it was an important dépôt for supplying the interior posts. While James Yale was factor in charge the buildings were totally destroyed by fire (1840), but a new stockade was immediately erected. In 1858 Langley was the prospective capital of the newly-erected province of British Columbia, and a town site was surveyed about the fort; but being considered indefensible from a military point of view, and on the wrong side of the river, New Westminster was chosen instead and Fort Langley was abandoned.

Fort McLoughlin was erected upon the seacoast in 1833, and placed in charge of Dr. Tolmie; but the location was insecure because of the hostility of the neighboring Indians, and it was therefore abandoned in 1843, the effects being removed to the newly-established Fort Camosum at Victoria.—ED.

<sup>76</sup> Fort Simpson, named in honor of Sir George, the Hudson's Bay Company's governor, was not upon Dundas Island, but on the mainland opposite. Its first site was six miles above the mouth of Nass River (1831). Three years later it was removed to the Chimsyan Peninsula, below Nass River—one of the finest harbors on the coast. It is still maintained as a Hudson's Bay post, being known as Port Simpson; recent efforts have been made to make this a port of entry for Pacific Ocean traffic.—ED.

<sup>77</sup> For Fort Fraser see *ante*, p. 56, note 68. Fort St. James, at the outlet of Stuart Lake (latitude  $54^{\circ} 26'$  north), was built in 1806 by Simon Fraser amid a large population of Indians, and has been maintained continuously to the present. After the advent of the Hudson's Bay Company, Fort St. James was made the emporium of New Caledonia, the residence of a chief factor. In 1828 it was visited by Sir George Simpson, who entered in proper state with buglers and bagpipers, the governor and his suite mounted, amid the welcoming discharge of cannon and musketry (A. McDonald, *Peace River*, pp. 24, 25). For two views of this post see Morice, *Northern Interior of British Columbia*, pp. 102, 110.

Fort McLeod is the oldest permanent post west of the Rocky Mountains. Founded in 1805 by Simon Fraser, it has maintained a continuous existence to the present. It was named for Archibald Norman McLeod, a colleague of its founder in the North West Company. Located on a lake of the same name, near the source of Finlay River, in latitude  $55^{\circ}$  north, it was chiefly useful as a supply post on the route from Canada via Peace River.

Chilcotin was founded (about 1828) on a river of the same name tributary to the upper Fraser, about latitude  $52^{\circ}$  as an outpost for Fort Alexandria (see

on Thompson's River, a tributary of Frazer's River, putting into it in latitude  $50^{\circ}$  and odd minutes; Kootania Fort, on Flatbow River; Flathead Fort, on Flathead River; Forts Hall and Boisais, on the Saptin; Forts Colville and Oakanagan, on the Columbia, above its junction with the Saptin; Fort Nez Percés or Wallawalla, a few miles below the junction;<sup>78</sup> Fort McKay, at the mouth of the Umpqua river, latitude  $43^{\circ} 30'$ , and longitude  $124^{\circ}$  west.<sup>79</sup>

They also have two migratory trading and trapping establishments of fifty or sixty men each. The one traps and trades in Upper California; the other in the country lying west, south, and east of Fort Hall. They also have a steam-vessel, heavily armed, which runs along the coast, and among its bays and inlets, for the twofold purpose of trading with the natives in places where they have no post, and of outbidding and outselling any American vessel that attempts to trade in those seas. They likewise have five sailing vessels, measuring from one hundred

*ante*, p. 44, note 53). Difficult of maintenance because of the troublesome character of the Chilcotin Indians, it was abandoned before 1850.

In addition to the posts mentioned, the Hudson's Bay Company had in Farnham's time within New Caledonia, Forts Babine, Connolly, and George — the latter on the upper Fraser, the two former on lakes of the same name in the far north.— Ed.

<sup>78</sup> All these posts have been before noted: Fort Thompson (Kamloops) in our volume vii, p. 199, note 64; Kootenay and Flathead in notes 45, 46, *ante*; Fort Hall in our volume xxi, p. 210, note 51; Fort Boise, in our volume xxviii, p. 321, note 199; Fort Colville in De Smet's *Letters*, our volume xxvii, p. 330, note 166; Okanagan in our volume vi, p. 260, note 71; Walla Walla in our volume xxi, p. 278, note 73.— Ed.

<sup>79</sup> Usually known as Fort Umpqua, this post was founded in 1832 by John McLeod, being situated about forty miles up the Umpqua River, on the south bank, on a small prairie of about two hundred acres. It was usually in charge of a French Canadian clerk, who needed to be vigilant because of the treacherous nature of the savages. The post was attacked in 1840 by ten times the number of defenders, but the assault was repulsed. The stockade having been burned (1851), the Hudson's Bay Company declined to rebuild, leasing the land to an American settler, W. W. Chapman.— Ed.

to five hundred tons [258] burthen, and armed with cannon, muskets, cutlasses, &c. These are employed a part of the year in various kinds of trade about the coast and the islands of the North Pacific, and the remainder of the time in bringing goods from London, and bearing back the furs for which they are exchanged.

One of these ships arrives at Fort Vancouver in the spring of each year, laden with coarse woollens, cloths, baizes, and blankets; hardware and cutlery; cotton cloths, calicoes, and cotton handkerchiefs; tea, sugar, coffee and cocoa; rice, tobacco, soap, beads, guns, powder, lead, rum, wine, brandy, gin, and playing cards; boots, shoes, and ready-made clothing, &c.; also, every description of sea stores, canvas, cordage, paints, oils, chains and chain cables, anchors, &c. Having discharged these "supplies," it takes a cargo of lumber to the Sandwich Islands, or of flour and goods to the Russians at Sitka or Kamskatka; returns in August; receives the furs collected at Fort Vancouver, and sails again for England.

The value of peltries annually collected in Oregon, by the Hudson Bay Comp., is about £140,000 in the London or New York market. The prime cost of the goods exchanged [259] for them is about £20,000. To this must be added the per centage of the officers as governors, factors, &c. the wages and food of about four hundred men, the expense of shipping to bring supplies of goods and take back the returns of furs, and two years' interest on the investments. The Company made arrangements in 1839 with the Russians at Sitka and at other ports, about the sea of Kamskatka, to supply them with flour and goods at fixed prices. As they are now opening large farms on the Cowelitz, the Umpqua, and in other parts of the Territory, for the production of wheat for that market; and as they can afford to sell goods purchased

in England under a contract of fifty years' standing, 20 or 30 per cent cheaper than American merchants can, there seems a certainty that the Hudson's Bay Company will engross the entire trade of the North Pacific, as it has that of Oregon.

Soon after the union of the North-West and Hudson's Bay Companies, the British Parliament passed an act extending the jurisdiction of the Canadian courts over the territories occupied by these fur traders, whether it were "owned" or "claimed by Great Britain." Under this act, certain [260] gentlemen of the fur company were appointed justices of the peace, and empowered to entertain prosecutions for minor offences, arrest and send to Canada criminals of a higher order, and try, render judgment, and grant execution in civil suits where the amount in issue should not exceed £200; and in case of non-payment, to imprison the debtor at their own forts, or in the jails of Canada.

It is thus shown that the trade, and the civil and criminal jurisdiction in Oregon are held by British subjects; that American citizens are deprived of their own commercial rights; that they are liable to be arrested on their own territory by officers of British courts, tried in the American domain by British judges, and imprisoned or hung according to the laws of the British empire, for acts done within the territorial limits of the Republic.

It has frequently been asked if Oregon will hereafter assume great importance as a thoroughfare between the States and China? The answer is as follows:

The Straits de Fuca, and arms of the sea to the eastward of it, furnish the only good harbours on the Oregon coast. Those in Puget's Sound offer every requisite facility [261] for the most extensive commerce. Ships beat out and into the straits with any winds of the coast,

and find in summer and winter fine anchorage at short intervals on both shores; and among the islands of the Sound, a safe harbour from the prevailing storms. From Puget's Sound eastward, there is a possible route for a railroad to the navigable waters of the Missouri; flanked with an abundance of fuel and other necessary materials. Its length would be about six hundred miles. Whether it would answer the desired end, would depend very much upon the navigation of the Missouri.<sup>80</sup>

As, however, the principal weight and bulk of cargoes in the Chinese trade would belong to the homeward voyage, and as the lumber used in constructing proper boats on the upper Missouri would sell in Saint Louis for something like the cost of construction, it may perhaps be presumed that the trade between China and the States could be conducted through such an overland communication.

The first day of the winter months came with bright skies over the beautiful valleys of Oregon. Mounts Washington and Jefferson reared their vast pyramids of ice and [262] snow among the fresh green forests of the lower hills, and overlooked the Willamette, the lower Columbia, and the distant sea. The herds of California cattle were lowing on the meadows, and the flocks of sheep from the downs of England were scampering and bleating around their shepherds on the plain; and the plane of the carpenter, the adze of the cooper, the hammer of the tinman, and the anvil of the blacksmith within the pickets, were all awake when I arose to breakfast for the last time at Fort Vancouver.

The beauty of the day, and the busy hum of life around me, accorded well with the feelings of joy with which

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<sup>80</sup> The idea of a transcontinental railway had not yet dawned. Farnham's plan shows, however, boldness of conception for these early days of railway building.—ED.



I made preparations to return to my family and home. And yet when I met at the table Dr. McLaughlin, Mr. Douglas, and others with whom I had passed many pleasant hours, and from whom I had received many kindnesses, a sense of sorrow mingled strongly with the delight which the occasion naturally inspired. I was to leave Vancouver for the Sandwich Islands, and see them no more. I confess that it has seldom been my lot to feel so deeply pained at parting with those whom I had known so little time. But it became me to hasten [263] my departure; for the ship had dropped down to the mouth of the river, and awaited the arrival of Mr. Simpson, one of the company's clerks,<sup>81</sup> Mr. Johnson, an American from St. Louis, and myself. While we are making the lower mouth of the Willamette, the reader will perhaps be amused with the sketch of life at Fort Vancouver.

Fort Vancouver is, as has been already intimated, the depot at which are brought the furs collected west of the Rocky Mountains, and from which they are shipped to England; the place also at which all the goods for the trade are landed; and from which they are distributed to the various posts of that territory by vessels, bateaux, or pack animals, as the various routes permit. It was established by Governor Simpson, in 1824, as the great centre of all commercial operations in Oregon;<sup>82</sup> is situated in a beautiful plain on the north bank of the Columbia, ninety miles from the sea, in latitude  $45\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  north, and in longitude  $122^{\circ}$  west; and stands four hundred yards from

<sup>81</sup> Alexander Simpson, a relation of Sir George, and brother of the Arctic explorer Thomas Simpson, whose early death was a loss to geographical science. Alexander Simpson was on his way to the Sandwich Islands, to investigate the trade conditions therein. See his *Life and Travels of Thomas Simpson* (London, 1845), pp. 345, 351.—ED.

<sup>82</sup> For the history of Fort Vancouver see our volume xxi, p. 297, note 82.—ED.

the water side. The noble river before it is sixteen hundred and seventy yards wide, and from five to seven fathoms in depth; the whole surrounding country is covered with [264] forests of pine, cedar, and fir, &c., interspersed here and there with small open spots; all overlooked by the vast snowy pyramids of the President's Range, thirty-five miles in the east.

The fort itself is an oblong square two hundred and fifty yards in length, by one hundred and fifty in breadth, enclosed by pickets twenty feet in height. The area within is divided into two courts, around which are arranged thirty-five wooden buildings, used as officers' dwellings, lodging apartment for clerks, storehouses for furs, goods, and grains; and as workshops for carpenters, blacksmiths, coopers, tanners, wheelwrights, &c. One building near the rear gate is occupied as a school-house; and a brick structure as a powder-magazine. The wooden buildings are constructed in the following manner. Posts are raised at convenient intervals, with grooves in the facing sides; in these grooves planks are inserted horizontally; and the walls are complete. Rafters raised upon plates in the usual way, and covered with boards, form the roofs.

Six hundred yards below the fort, and on the bank of the river, is a village of fifty-three wooden houses, generally constructed [265] like those within the pickets. In these live the Company's servants. Among them is a hospital, in which those who become diseased are humanely treated. At the back, and a little east of the fort, is a barn containing a mammoth threshing machine; and near this are a number of long sheds, used for storing grain in the sheaf. And behold the Vancouver farm, stretching up and down the river (3,000 acres, fenced into beautiful fields) sprinkled with dairy houses, and herdsmen and shepherds' cottages! A busy place.



The farmer on horseback at break of day, summons one hundred half-breeds and Iroquois Indians from their cabins to the fields. Twenty or thirty ploughs tear open the generous soil; the sowers follow with their seed, and pressing on them come a dozen harrows to cover it; and thus thirty or forty acres are planted in a day, till the immense farm is under crop. The season passes on, teeming with daily industry, until the harvest waves on all these fields. Then sickle and hoe glisten in tireless activity to gather in the rich reward of this toil; the food of seven hundred at this post, and of thousands more at the posts on the deserts in the east and [266] north. The saw mill, too, is a scene of constant toil. Thirty or forty Sandwich Islanders are felling the pines and dragging them to the mill; sets of hands are plying two gangs of saws by night and day. Three thousand feet of lumber per day; nine hundred thousand feet per annum; are constantly being shipped to foreign ports.

The grist mill is not idle. It must furnish bread stuff for the posts, and the Russian market in the north-west. And its deep music is heard daily and nightly half the year.

We will now enter the fort. The blacksmith is repairing ploughshares, harrow teeth, chains and mill irons; the tinman is making cups for the Indians, and camp-kettles, &c.; the wheelwright is making waggons, and the wood parts of ploughs and harrows; the carpenter is repairing houses and building new ones; the cooper is making barrels for pickling salmon and packing furs; the clerks are posting books, and preparing the annual returns to the board in London; the salesmen are receiving beaver and dealing out goods. Listen to the voices of those children from the school house. They are the half-breed offspring of the gentlemen and servants of [267] the

Company, educated at the Company's expense, preparatory to their being apprenticed to trades in Canada. They learn the English language, writing, arithmetic and geography. The gardener, too, is singing out his honest satisfaction, as he surveys from the northern gate ten acres of apple trees laden with fruit, his bowers of grapevines, his beds of vegetables and flowers. The bell rings for dinner; we will now pay a visit to the "Hall" and its convivialities.

The dining-hall is a spacious room on the second floor, ceiled with pine above and at the sides. In the southwest corner of it is a large close stove, giving out sufficient caloric to make it comfortable.

At the end of a table twenty feet in length stands Governor McLaughlin, directing guests and gentlemen from neighbouring posts to their places; and chief-traders, traders, the physician, clerks, and the farmer, slide respectfully to their places, at distances from the Governor corresponding to the dignity of their rank in the service. Thanks are given to God, and all are seated. Roast beef and pork, boiled mutton, baked salmon, boiled ham; beets, carrots, turnips, cabbage and potatoes, and wheaten bread, are tastefully distributed [268] over the table among a dinner-set of elegant queen's ware, burnished with glittering glasses and decanters of various-coloured Italian wines. Course after course goes round, and the Governor fills to his guests and friends; and each gentleman in turn vies with him in diffusing around the board a most generous allowance of viands, wines, and warm fellow-feeling. The cloth and wines are removed together, cigars are lighted, and a strolling smoke about the premises, enlivened by a courteous discussion of some mooted point of natural history or politics, closes the ceremonies of the dinner hour at Fort Vancouver. These are some of the incidents of life at Vancouver.

But we moor on the lower point of Wappatoo Island, to regale ourselves with food and fire. This is the highest point of it, and is said to be never overflowed. A bold rocky shore, and the water is deep enough to float the largest vessels, indicate it to be a site for the commercial mart of the island. But the southern shore of the river, half a mile below, is past a doubt the most important point for a town site on the Columbia.<sup>83</sup> It lies at the lower mouth of the Willamette, the natural outlet of the best agricultural district of [269] Oregon. It is a hillside of gentle acclivity, covered with pine forests. There is a gorge in the mountains through which a road from it to the prairies on the south can easily be constructed. At this place the Hudson's Bay Company have erected a house, and occupy it with one of their servants.

Having eaten our cold lunch, we left Wappatoo Island to the dominion of its wild hogs, and took again to our boat. It was a drizzly, cheerless day. The clouds ran fast from the south-west, and obscured the sun. The wind fell in irregular gusts upon the water, and made it difficult to keep our boat afloat. But we had a sturdy old Sandwich Islander at one oar, and some four or five able-bodied Indians at others, and despite winds and waves, slept that night a dozen miles below the Cowelitz. Thus far below Vancouver, the Columbia was generally more than one thousand yards wide, girded on either side by mountains rising very generally, from the water side, two or three thousand feet in height, and covered with dense forests of pine and fir. These mountains are used by the Chinooks as burial-places. During the epidemic fever of 1832, which almost swept this [270] portion of the Columbia valley of its inhabitants, vast numbers of

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<sup>83</sup> The site of the present St. Helens, a small town, the seat of Columbia County, Oregon.— Ed.

the dead were placed among them. They were usually wrapped in skins, placed in the canoes, and hung from the boughs of trees six or eight feet from the ground. Thousands of these were seen.<sup>84</sup>

They hung in groups near the water side. One of them had a canoe inverted over the one containing the dead, and lashed tightly to it. We were often driven close to the shore by the heavy wind, and always noticed that these sepulchral canoes were perforated at the bottom. I was informed that this is always done for the twofold purpose of letting out the water which the rains may deposit in them, and of preventing their ever being used again by the living.

The 3rd was a boisterous day. The southerly winds drove in a heavy tide from the Pacific, and lashed the Columbia into foam; but by keeping under the windward shore, we made steady progress till sunset, when the increased expanse of the river indicated that we were about fifteen miles from the sea. The wind died away, and we pushed on rapidly; but the darkness was so great that we lost our course, and grounded upon a sand-bar three miles to the [271] north of Tongue Point.<sup>85</sup> After considerable trouble, we succeeded in getting off, steered to the northern shore, and in half an hour were again in deep water. But "the ship, the ship," was on every tongue. Was it above or below Tongue Point? If the

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<sup>84</sup> This epidemic began in 1829, and wrought great mortality among the natives. By 1832 it was particularly severe around Fort Vancouver. One village visited contained but two infants living — the remainder of the inhabitants having died of the plague. Various causes have been given, some regarding the disease as scarlet fever, others as some form of malaria due to putrid food, others thinking it attributable to immoral habits, etc. By its ravages nearly three-fourths of the native population was swept from the lower Columbia before the advent of American immigrants.— ED.

<sup>85</sup> For Tongue Point see our volume vi, p. 242, note 44.— ED.

latter, we could not reach it that night, for the wind freshened again every instant, and the waves grew angry and fearful, and dashed into the boat at every sweep of the paddles.

We were beginning to calculate our prospects of another hour's breathing when the shadowy outline of the ship was brought between us and the open horizon of the mouth of the river, a half mile below us. The oars struck fast and powerfully now, and the frail boat shot over the whitened waves for a few minutes, and lay dancing and surging under the lee of the noble "Vancouver." A rope was hastily thrown us, and we stood upon her beautiful deck, manifestly barely saved from a watery grave. For now the sounding waves broke awfully all around us. Captain Duncan received us very kindly, and introduced us immediately to the cordial hospitalities of his cabin. The next morning we dropped down to Astoria, and anchored one hundred [272] yards from the shore. The captain and passengers landed about ten o'clock; and as I felt peculiar interest in the spot, immortalized no less by the genius of Irving than the enterprize of John Jacob Astor, I spent my time very industriously in exploring it.

The site of this place is three quarters of a mile above the point of land between the Columbia and Clatsop Bay. It is a hillside, formerly covered with a very heavy forest. The space which has been cleared may amount to four acres. It is rendered too wet for cultivation by numberless springs bursting from the surface. The back ground is still a forest rising over lofty hills; in the foreground is the Columbia, and the broken pine hills of the opposite shore. The Pacific opens in the west.

Astoria has passed away; nothing is left of its buildings but an old batten cedar door; nothing remaining of its bastions and pickets, but half a dozen of the latter,

tottering among the underbrush. While scrambling over the grounds, we came upon the trunk of an immense tree, long since prostrated, which measured between six and seven fathoms in circumference. No information [273] could be obtained as to the length of time it had been decaying.

The Hudson's Bay Company are in possession, and call the post Fort George. They have erected three log buildings, and occupy them with a clerk,<sup>86</sup> who acts as a telegraph keeper of events at the mouth of the river. If a vessel arrives, or is seen laying off and on, information of the fact is sent to Vancouver, with all the rapidity which can be extracted from arms and paddles.

This individual also carries on a limited trade with the Chinook and Clatsop Indians; such is his influence over them, that he bears among the Company's gentlemen the very distinguished title of "King of the Chinooks." He is a fine, lusty, companionable fellow, and I am disposed to believe, wears the crown with quite as little injury to his subjects as to himself.

In the afternoon we bade adieu to Astoria, and dropped down toward Cape Disappointment.—The channel of the river runs from the fort in a north-western direction to the point of the Cape, and thence close under it in a south-westerly course the distance of four miles, where it crosses the bar. The wind was quite baffling while we [274] were crossing to the northern side; and we consequently began to anticipate a long residence in Baker's Bay.<sup>87</sup> But as we neared the Cape, a delightful breeze sprang up in the east, filled every sail, and drove

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<sup>86</sup> For James Birnie, the clerk in charge, see Townsend's *Narrative* in our volume xxi, p. 361, note 130.—Ed.

<sup>87</sup> For Baker's Bay see our volume vi, p. 234, note 38.—Ed.



the stately ship through the heavy seas and swells most merrily.

The lead is dipping, and the sailors are chanting each measure as they take it; we approach the bar; the soundings decrease; every shout grows more and more awful! the keel of the Vancouver is within fifteen inches of the bar! Every breath is suspended, and every eye fixed on the leads, as they are quickly thrown again! They sink; and the chant for five fathoms enables us to breathe freely. We have passed the bar; Captain Duncan grasps his passengers by the hand warmly, and congratulates them at having escaped being lost in those wild waters, where many a noble ship and brave heart have sunk together and for ever.

Off the mouth of the Columbia — on the deep, long swells of the Pacific seas. The rolling surges boom along the mountainous shores. Up the vale one hundred miles the white pyramid of Mount Washington towers above the clouds, and the green [275] forest of Lower Oregon. That scene I shall never forget. It was too wild, too unearthly to be described. It was seen at sunset; and a night of horrid tempest shut in upon this, the author's last view of Oregon.

The following abstract of Commander Wilkes' Report on Oregon came to hand while this work was in the press, and the author takes great pleasure in appending it to his work. Mr. Wilkes' statistics of the Territory, it will be seen, agree in all essential particulars with those given in previous pages. There is one point only of any importance that needs to be named, in regard to which truth requires a protest; and that is contained in the commander's concluding remarks. It will be seen on reference to them, that the agricultural capabilities of Oregon are placed above those of any part of the world beyond the tropics.



This is a most surprising conclusion; at war with his own account of the several sections which he visited, and denied by every intelligent man living in the territory. What! Oregon, in this respect, equal to California, or the Valley of the Mississippi! This can never be, until Oregon be blessed with a vast increase of productive soil, and California [276] and our own unequalled Valley be greatly changed.

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*Extracts from the Report of Lieutenant Wilkes to the Secretary of the Navy, of the examination, by the Exploring Expedition, of the Oregon Territory.*<sup>88</sup>

The Territory embraced under the name of Oregon, extends from latitude 42° north to that of 53° 40' north, and west of the Rocky Mountains. Its natural boundaries, were they attended to, would confine it within the above geographical boundaries.

On the east it has the range of Rocky Mountains along its whole extent; on the south those of the Klamet range, running on the parallel of 42° and dividing it from California; on the west the Pacific Ocean; and on the north the western trend of the Rocky Mountains, and the chain of lakes near and along the parallels of 54° and 55°

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<sup>88</sup> Charles Wilkes (1798-1877) entered the navy as a midshipman (1818). He rose to a lieutenancy, and in 1838 was placed in charge of an expedition composed of five vessels dispatched to explore Southern seas. After visiting the Pacific islands, the squadron (1841) explored the Northwest Coast, Wilkes personally visiting the Columbia and Willamette. Appointed to the rank of captain (1835), Wilkes was commander of the vessel that in the War of Secession stopped the steamer "Trent," and took therefrom the Confederate envoys Mason and Slidell. During the remainder of the war he was in charge of the West India squadron. Retiring in 1864, two years later he attained the rank of rear-admiral. The report of the Wilkes Exploring Expedition was not published until 1845, when five volumes were issued; later, other editions brought the number up to eighteen. In 1842, however, a *Synopsis of the Cruise of the United States Exploring Expedition during the years 1838, '39, '40, '41 and '42* was published at Washington. From this version Farnham evidently made his extracts.—Ed.

north, dividing it from the British territory. It is remarkable that, within these limits, all the rivers which flow through the Territory take their rise.

The Territory is divided into three natural belts or sections, viz:

[277] 1st. That between the Pacific Ocean and Cascade Mountains, (President's range) or western section;

2nd. That between the Cascade mountains and blue mountain range, or middle section;

3rd. That between the Blue and Rocky Mountain chains, or eastern section.

And this division will equally apply to the soil, climate, and productions.

The mountain ranges run, for the most part, in parallel lines with the coast, and, rising in many places above the snow line (here found to be 6,500 feet), would naturally produce a difference of temperature between them, and also affect their productions.

Our surveys and explorations were confined, for the most part, to the two first, claiming more interest from being less known, and more in accordance with my instructions.

MOUNTAINS.—The Cascade range, or that nearest the coast, runs from the southern boundary, on a parallel with the sea coast, the whole length of the territory, north and south, rising, in many places, in high peaks, from twelve to fourteen thousand feet above the level of the sea, in regular cones. Their [278] distance from the coast line is from one hundred to a hundred and fifty miles, and they almost interrupt the communication between the sections, except where the two great rivers, the Columbia and Frazer's, force a passage through them.

There are a few mountain passes, but they are difficult, and only to be attempted late in the spring and summer.

A small range (the Claset) lies to the northward of the Columbia, between the coast and the waters of Puget's Sound, and along the strait of Juan de Fuca. This has several high peaks, which rise above the snow line, but, from their proximity to the sea, they are not at all times covered.<sup>89</sup>

Their general direction is north and south, but there are many spurs or offsets that cause this portion to be very rugged.

The Blue mountains are irregular in their course, and occasionally interrupted, but generally tend from north by east to north-east, and from south to south-west.

In some parts they may be traced as spurs or offsets of the Rocky Mountains. Near the southern boundary they unite with the Klamet range, which runs east and west from the rocky mountains.<sup>90</sup>

[279] The Rocky Mountains are too well known to need description. The different passes will, however, claim attention hereafter. North of 48° the ranges are nearly parallel and have the rivers flowing between them.

ISLANDS.—Attached to the territory are groups of islands, bordering its northern coast. Among these are the large islands of Vancouver and Washington or Queen Charlotte; the former being two hundred and sixty miles in length, and fifty in width, containing about fifteen

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<sup>89</sup> What are now known as the Olympic Mountains, in northwest Washington. The term "Claset" was first employed by Vancouver (1792), who bestowed upon what Cook had called Cape Flattery, the name Point Claset, from an adjacent Indian village of that name; see George Vancouver, *Voyage of Discovery* (London, 1801), ii, pp. 46-48.—ED.

<sup>90</sup> By the Klameth (Klamath) is intended the present Siskiyou Mountains, which branch off from Sierra Nevada toward the coast in about latitude 42°, the boundary between California and Oregon. The country between the Rockies and California had not then been explored, but there was an erroneous idea of a transverse chain of mountains which was confused with the Sierra Nevada; see our volume xxviii, p. 305, note 182.—ED.

thousand square miles, and the latter a hundred and fifty miles in length and thirty in breadth, containing four thousand square miles.<sup>91</sup>

Though somewhat broken in surface, their soil is said to be well adapted to agriculture.

They have many good harbours, and have long been the resort of those engaged in the fur trade; they enjoy a mild and salubrious climate, and have an abundance of fine fish frequenting their waters, which are taken in large quantities by the natives. Coal of good quality is found, specimens of which I obtained. The Hudson's Bay Company have made a trial of it, but, owing to its having been taken from near the surface, it [280] was not very highly spoken of. Veins of minerals are also said to exist by those acquainted with these islands.

They both appear to be more densely inhabited than other portions of the territory. The natives are considered a treacherous race, particularly those in the vicinity of Johnson's Straits,<sup>92</sup> and are to be closely watched when dealing with them.

At the south-east end of Vancouver's, there is a small archipelago of islands, through which the canal de Arro

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<sup>91</sup> Vancouver Island was long supposed to be a portion of the mainland. Its insularity was not proved until 1792, when both Vancouver and the Spanish ships circumnavigated it. At the request of the Spanish envoy, it received the name Quadra and Vancouver Island (see Vancouver, *Voyage*, ii, p. 357); but the length of the appellation has caused the first part to be dropped. See our volume xxviii, p. 33, note 10.

Queen Charlotte Islands (now proved to be two) were first visited by the Spaniards in 1774. Dixon, an English navigator, named the group in 1787, giving his own name to the channel north of the island. The Americans, in ignorance of Dixon's prior discovery, named the island for Washington (1789); see our volume xxviii, p. 38, note 16.—ED.

<sup>92</sup> Johnstone Straits, named for one of Vancouver's lieutenants who first discovered the passage thence to Queen Charlotte Sound, are on the northeast coast of Vancouver Island, separating it from the mainland.—ED.

runs.<sup>93</sup> They are for the most part uninhabited, well wooded, and composed of granite and pudding stone, which appear to be the prevailing rock to the northward of a line east from the strait of Juan de Fuca. They are generally destitute of fresh water, have but few anchorages, and strong currents render navigation among them difficult.

The islands nearer the main land, called on the maps Pitt's Banks, or the Prince Royal islands, are of the same character, and are only occasionally resorted to by the Indians, for the purpose of fishing.<sup>94</sup>

The coast of the mainland, north of the parallel of 49°, is broken up by numerous inlets called canals, having perpendicular sides, and very deep water in them, affording [281] no harbours, and but few commercial inducements to frequent them.

The land is equally cut up by spurs from the Cascade range, which here intersects the country in all directions, and prevents its adaptation for agriculture.

Its value is principally in its timber, and it is believed that few if any countries can compare with it in this respect.

There is no part on this coast where a settlement could be formed between Frazer's river, or 49° north, and the northern boundary of 54° 40' north, that would be able to supply its own wants.

<sup>93</sup> Gonzalez Lopez de Haro was pilot of two expeditions dispatched by the Spaniards (1788, 1789) to watch their interests on the Northwest Coast. An expedition of discovery passing from Juan de Fuca Straits into the Gulf of Georgia (1790), gave to the channel the name of Lopez de Haro. This appears on Vancouver's map as "Canal de Arro." During the boundary dispute (1858) between the United States and British Columbia concerning the islands at the entrance of Juan de Fuca Straits, the Canal de Haro acquired much prominence as a limit to the United States claim. The matter was submitted to the decision of the German emperor, who gave the award in favor of the United States (1872), hence Canal de Haro became an international boundary.—ED.

<sup>94</sup> The three largest islands off the mainland east of Hecata Strait and Queen Charlotte are Princess Royal, Pitt, and Banks.—ED.

The Hudson's Bay Company have posts within this section of the country: Fort McLaughlin, in Millbank sound, in latitude  $52^{\circ} 10'$  north, and Fort Simpson, in latitude  $54^{\circ} 30'$  north, within Dundas island, and at the entrance of Chatham sound; but they are only posts for the fur trade of the coast, and are supplied twice a year with provisions, &c.

It is believed that the Company have yet no establishment on any of the islands; but I understood it was in contemplation to make one on Vancouver's island, in the vicinity of Nootka sound, or that of Clayoquot.<sup>95</sup>

[282] Owing to the dense fogs, the coast is extremely dangerous; and they render it at all times difficult to approach and navigate it. The interior of this portion of the territory is traversed by the three ranges of mountains, with the several rivers which take their rise in them, and is probably unequalled for its ruggedness, and from all accounts incapable of anything like cultivation.

The Columbia in its trend to the westward, along the parallel of  $48^{\circ}$ , cuts off the central or Blue mountain range, which is not again met with until on the parallel of  $45^{\circ}$ . From  $45^{\circ}$  they trend away to the southward and westward, until they fall into the Klamet range. This latter portion is but partially wooded.

RIVERS.—The Columbia claims the first notice. Its

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<sup>95</sup> The fort upon Vancouver Island was founded at its southern extremity—not at Nootka, or at Clayoquot Sound just below. Built in 1843, the aboriginal name Camosun was soon changed to Victoria, in honor of the British sovereign. When Oregon passed to the United States, Victoria became the presumptive capital of British territory, and thither James Douglas, chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, removed. In 1849 the island of Vancouver was ceded to the fur company on condition that a colony of British subjects be established thereon. Accordingly Victoria was platted in 1851, and two years later had a population of three hundred. The place was incorporated in 1862, and is now the capital of British Columbia. It is a substantially built town, picturesquely situated by the seashore, and possesses a mild climate.—ED.





northern branch takes its rise in the Rocky mountains, in latitude  $50^{\circ}$  north, longitude  $116^{\circ}$  west; from thence it pursues a northern route to near McGillivray's Pass, in the Rocky mountains.<sup>96</sup> At the boat encampment, the river is three thousand six hundred feet above the level of the sea (here it receives two small tributaries, the Canoe river and that from the Committee's Punch Bowl), from thence it [283] turns south, having some obstructions to its safe navigation, and receiving many tributaries in its course to Colville, among which are the Kootanie, or Flat Bow, and the Flat Head or Clarke river from the east, and that of Colville from the west.

This great river is bounded thus far on its course by a range of high mountains, well-wooded, and in places expands into a line of lakes before it reaches Colville, where it is two thousand and forty-nine feet above the level of the sea, having a fall of five hundred and fifty feet in two hundred and twenty miles. To the south of this it trends to the westward, receiving the Spokane river from the east, which is not navigable, and takes its rise in the Lake of Cœur d'Alène. Thence it pursues a westerly course for about sixty miles, receiving several smaller streams, and at its bend to the south it is joined by the Okanagan, a river that has its source in a line of lakes, affording canoe and boat navigation for a considerable extent to the northward.

The Columbia thence passes to the southward until it reaches Wallawalla, in the latitude of  $45^{\circ}$  a distance of one hundred and sixty miles, receiving the Piscous,

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<sup>96</sup> Probably Athabasca Pass, for which see *ante*, p. 30, note 23. McGillivray's Portage is the route less than two miles in length between the headwaters of Kootenai River and those of the Columbia. See De Smet's *Oregon Missions*, *post*, p. 209, note 109.—ED.



Y'Akama, and Point de Boise, or Entyatecoom,<sup>97</sup> from [284] the west, which take their rise in the Cascade range, and also its great south-eastern branch, the Saptin or Lewis, which has its source in the Rocky mountains, near our southern boundary, and being a large quantity of water to increase the volume of the main stream. The Lewis is not navigable, even for canoes, except in reaches. The rapids are extensive and of frequent occurrence. It generally passes between the Rocky mountain spurs and the Blue mountains. It receives the Koos-koos-ke, Salmon, and several other rivers, from the east and west (the former from the Rocky mountains, the latter from the Blue mountains)<sup>98</sup> and, were it navigable, would much facilitate the intercourse with this part of the country. Its length to its junction with the Columbia is five hundred and twenty miles.

The Columbia at Wallawalla is one thousand two hundred and eighty-six feet above the level of the sea, and about three thousand five hundred wide; it now takes its last turn to the westward, receiving the Umatilla, Quisnel's, John Day's, and de Chute rivers from the south, and Cathlatate's from the north,<sup>99</sup> pursuing its rapid

<sup>97</sup> For the Yakima, Pisuow, and Entiatqua rivers see our volume vii, pp. 141, 147, 148, notes 40, 44, 45, respectively.—ED.

<sup>98</sup> This is an error, for both the Kooskooske (Clearwater) and Salmon are eastern affluents of the Lewis. The former rises in the Bitter Root Mountains in several branches, which flowing westward unite in a large stream entering the Lewis at Lewiston. It was down this stream that Lewis and Clark made their way to Columbian waters; see *Original Journals*, iii, pp. 97-102.

For the Salmon see our volume xxi, p. 69, note 45.—ED.

<sup>99</sup> Three of these rivers are alluded to in note 55, p. 45, *ante*. Wilkes reported them from hearsay information, for his own journey did not extend above Fort Vancouver. Quisnel's (Quesnel) River, an affluent of the Fraser in New Caledonia, was named for Jules Maurice Quesnel, Fraser's lieutenant on his voyage of 1808. As here placed, "Quisnel's" would seem to denote a Columbia affluent between Umatilla and John Day's; for such a branch see our volume vii, p. 135, note 34.

Cathlatate River is found on the map of Charles Preuss, drawn from the

course of eighty miles, previous to passing through the range of Cascade mountains, in [285] a series of falls and rapids that obstruct its flow, and form insurmountable barriers to the passage of boats by water during the floods. These difficulties, however, are overcome by portages.

From thence there is a still water navigation for forty miles, when its course is again obstructed by rapids.

Thence to the ocean, one hundred and twenty miles, it is navigable for vessels of twelve feet draught of water at the lowest state of the river, though obstructed by many sand-bars.

In this part it receives the Willamette from the south, and the Cowelitz from the north. The former is navigable for small vessels twenty miles, to the mouth of the Klackamus, three miles below its falls; the latter cannot be called navigable except for a small part of the year, during the floods, and then only for canoes and barges.<sup>100</sup>

The width of the Columbia, within twenty miles of its mouth, is much increased, and it joins the ocean between Cape Disappointment and Point Adams, forming a sand-pit from each by deposit, and causing a dangerous bar, which greatly impedes its navigation and entrance.

Frazer's river next claims attention. It [286] takes its rise in the Rocky mountain, near the source of Canoe river, taking a north-western course of eighty miles; it then turns to the southward, receiving the waters of Stuart's river, which rises in a chain of lakes near the northern boundary of the Territory.<sup>101</sup>

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surveys of Frémont (published in 1848), as a northern affluent of the Columbia, between the Cascades and the Dalles; it would appear to correspond, therefore, either to Klickitat or White Salmon River.—ED.

<sup>100</sup> See on these streams our volumes vi, p. 245, note 49; and xxi, p. 320, note 105.—ED.

<sup>101</sup> Stuart River was discovered (1806) by Simon Fraser, who named it in

It then pursues a southerly course, receiving the waters of the Chilcotin, Pinksliitsa, and several smaller streams, from the west, and those of Thompson's river, Quisnell's<sup>102</sup> and other streams, from the east, (these take their rise in lakes, and are navigable in canoes, by making portages); and under the parallel of 49° it breaks through the Cascade range in a succession of falls and rapids, and, after a westerly course of seventy miles it empties itself into the gulf of Georgia, in the latitude of 49° 07' north. This latter portion is navigable for vessels that can pass its bar drawing twelve feet water; its whole length being three hundred and fifty miles.

The Chikeelis is next in importance. It has three sources among the range of hills that intersect the country north of the Columbia river. After a very tortuous course, and receiving some small streams issuing from the lakes in the high ground near the [287] head-quarters of Hood's canal and Puget's Sound, it disembogues in Grey's harbour;<sup>103</sup> it is not navigable except for canoes; its current is rapid, and the stream much obstructed.

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honor of his companion, John Stuart. It rises near latitude 56° north, flowing southwest through several lakes, of which Stuart Lake is the largest, into Nechaco River. The latter comes from the west along the fifty-fourth parallel, and carries the waters of Stuart's River into the Fraser, sixty-five miles farther east at the site of Fort George.—ED.

<sup>102</sup> Chilcotin River, named for a turbulent Indian tribe, rises in several branches, and flows west not far from the fifty-second parallel, into Fraser River. By Pinksliitsa is probably intended the Puntataenkut, a small western affluent entering the Fraser at 53° north latitude, opposite the Quesnel, which comes from the east, having taken its rise in a large lake of the same name. For Thompson's River see our volume vii, p. 159, note 51.—ED.

<sup>103</sup> Chehalis River, the largest coastal stream of Washington, drains the western central part of that state, receiving many tributaries from the southern slope of the Olympic Mountains. It is navigable for steamers as far as Montesano, seat of a county of the same name as the river. The principal industry of the Chehalis River valley is lumbering, although agriculture is creeping into the cleared districts. Gray's Harbor branch of the Northern Pacific Railway traverses the entire valley. For Gray's Harbor see our volume vi, p. 256, note 64.—ED.

To the south of the Columbia there are many small streams, three of which only deserve the name of rivers: the Umpqua, Too-too-tut-na, or Rogues' river, and the Klamet, which latter empties itself into the ocean south of the parallel of  $42^{\circ}$ .<sup>104</sup> None of these form harbours capable of receiving a vessel of more than eight feet draught of water, and the bars for most part of the year are impassable from the surf that sets in on the coast. The character of the great rivers is peculiar — rapid and sunken much below the level of the country, with perpendicular banks; indeed they are, as it were, in trenches, it being extremely difficult to get at the water in many places, owing to the steep basaltic walls; and during the rise they are in many places confined by dalles, which back the water some distance, submerging islands and *tracts of low prairie*, giving the appearance of extensive lakes.

LAKES.—There are in the various sections of the country many lakes. The Okanagan, Stuart's, Quisnell's, and Kamloop's are the largest in the northern section.<sup>105</sup>

[288] The Flat Bow, Cœur d'Alène, and Kulluspelm, in the middle section, and those forming the head-waters of the large rivers in the eastern section.<sup>106</sup> The country

<sup>104</sup> For the Umpqua see our volume vii, p. 231, note 82; for the Klamath, *ante*, p. 46, note 56. Rogue River in the southwestern portion of Oregon, is a rapid stream of considerable size, rising in many branches in the Cascade Range, its northernmost tributary heading near Crater Lake. Its general course is west and southwest, the chief tributary being Illinois River. The name Rogue was derived from a troublesome tribe of Indians who attacked parties of overland emigrants from California; see our volume xxi, pp. 328, 329.—ED.

<sup>105</sup> For Lake Okanagan see De Smet's *Letters* in our volume xxvii, p. 372, note 193. Stuart and Quesnel are mentioned in notes 99, 101, *ante*; Lake Kamloops in our volume vii, p. 159, note 51.—ED.

<sup>106</sup> Flat Bow is now known as Kootenai Lake, an enlargement of the river of that name in southeastern British Columbia, over sixty miles in length. For

is well watered, and there are but few places where an abundance of water, either from rivers, springs, or rivulets, cannot be obtained.

The smaller lakes add much to the picturesque beauty of the country. They are generally at the head-waters of the smaller streams. The map will point out more particularly their extent and locality.

HARBOURS.—All the harbours formed by the rivers on the sea-coast are obstructed by extensive sand-bars, which make them difficult to enter. The rivers bring down large quantities of sand, which is deposited on meeting with the ocean, causing a gradual increase of the impediments already existing at their mouths. None of them can be deemed safe ports to enter. The entrance to the Columbia is impracticable two-thirds of the year, and the difficulty of leaving is equally great.

The north sands are rapidly increasing, and extending further to the southward. In the memory of several of those who have been longest in the country, Cape Disappointment has been encroached upon some [289] hundred feet by the sea, and, during my short experience, nearly half an acre of the middle sands was washed away in a few days. These sands are known to change every season.

The exploration made of the Clatsop, or South channel, it is believed, will give more safety to vessels capable of entering the river. The depth of water on the bar seems not to have changed, though the passage has become somewhat narrow.

Grey's harbour will admit of vessels of light draught of water, (ten feet), but there is but little room in it, on

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Cœur d'Alène Lake see our volume vii, p. 211, note 75; Kulluspelm (Kalispel) is the modern Pend d'Oreille Lake, for which see De Smet's *Letters* in our volume xxvii, p. 339, note 175.—ED.

account of the extensive mud and sand flats. A survey was made of it, to which I refer for particulars.

This, however, is not the case with the harbours formed within the straits of Juan de Fuca, of which there are many; and no part of the world affords finer inland sounds or a greater number of harbours than can be found here, capable of receiving the largest class of vessels, and without a danger in them which is not visible. From the rise and fall of the tides, (eighteen feet), every facility is afforded for the erection of works for a great maritime nation. For [290] further information, our extensive surveys of these waters are referred to.

CLIMATE.—That of the western section is mild throughout the year, neither experiencing the cold of winter nor the heat of summer. By my experiments, the mean temperature was found to be 54° of Fahrenheit.

The prevailing winds in the summer are from the northward and westward, and in the winter, from the southward and westward, and south-east, which are tempestuous. The winter is supposed to last from December to February; rains usually begin to fall in November, and last till March, but they are not heavy though frequent.

Snow sometimes falls, but it seldom lies more than three days. The frosts are early, occurring in the latter part of August; this, however, is to be accounted for by the proximity of the mountains. A mountain or easterly wind invariably causes a great fall in the temperature; these winds are not frequent. During the summer of our operations, I found but *three days* noted of easterly winds.

The nights are cold, and affect the vegetation so far, that Indian corn will not ripen. Fruit-trees blossom early in April [291] at Nisqually and Vancouver; and at the former place, on the 12th of May, peas were a foot



high, strawberries in full blossom, and salad had already gone to seed.

The mean height of the barometer, during our stay at Nisqually, was 30.046 inches, and of the thermometer 66° 58' Fahrenheit. The thermometer at 4 A. M. on the 4th of July, was at 50° Fahrenheit, and on the same day, at 2 P. M., 90° Fahrenheit. The lowest degree was 39° at 4 A. M., May 22d, and at 5 P. M. of the same day, the temperature was 72° of Fahrenheit.

From June to September at Vancouver the mean height of the barometer was 30.32 inches, and the thermometer 66° 33' of Fahrenheit. Out of one hundred and six days, seventy-six were fair, nineteen cloudy, and eleven rainy. The rains are light; this is evident from the hills *not being washed*, and having a sward to their tops, *although of great declivity*.

The second, or middle section, is subject to droughts. During the summer the atmosphere is much drier and warmer, and the winter much colder than in the western section. Its extremes of heat and cold are more frequent and greater, the mercury at times falling as low as minus 18° of [292] Fahrenheit in the winter, and rising to 180° [*sic*] in the shade in summer; the daily difference of temperature is about 40° Fahrenheit. It has, however, been found extremely salubrious, possessing a pure and healthy air.

The stations of the missionaries and posts of the Hudson's Bay Company, have afforded me the means of obtaining information relative to the climate. Although full data have not been kept, yet these observations afford a tolerably good knowledge of the weather.

In summer the atmosphere is cooled by the strong westerly breezes, which replace the vacuum produced by the heated prairie grounds. No dews fall in this section.



The climate of the third, or eastern section, is extremely variable. The temperature during the day, differing from 50° to 60°, renders it unfit for agriculture, and there are but few places in its northern part where the climate would not effectually put a stop to its ever becoming settled.

In each day, from the best accounts, all the changes are experienced incident to spring, summer, autumn, and winter. There are places where small farms might be located, but they are few in number.

[293] SOIL.—That of the first, or western section varies in the northern parts from a light brown loam to a thin vegetable earth, with gravel and sand as a sub-soil: in the middle parts, from a rich heavy loam and unctuous clay to a deep heavy black loam on a trap rock; and in the southern, the soil is generally good, varying from a black vegetable loam to decomposed basalt, with stiff clay, and portions of loose gravel soil. The hills are generally basalt, and stone, and slate.

Between the Umpqua and the boundary, the rocks are primitive, consisting of talcon slate, hornblende, and granite, which produce a gritty and poor soil; some places of rich prairie however, occur covered with oaks.

The soil of the second, or middle section, is for the most part a light sandy loam, in the valleys rich alluvial, and the hills are generally barren.

The third, or eastern section, is a rocky, broken, and barren country. Stupendous mountain spurs traverse it in all directions, affording little level ground; snow lies on the mountains nearly, if not quite, the year through.

AGRICULTURE, PRODUCTIONS, &c.—The [294] first section, for the most part, is a well-timbered country; it is intersected with the spurs, or offsets, from the Cascade mountains, which render its surface much broken: these

are covered with a dense forest. It is well-watered, and communication between the northern, southern, and middle parts is difficult, on account of the various rivers, spurs of mountains, &c.

The timber consists of pines, firs, spruce, oaks, (red and white), ash, arbutus, arbor vitæ, cedar, poplar, maple, willow, cherry, and tew, with a close undergrowth of hazel, rubus, roses, &c. The richest and best soil is found on the second or middle prairie, and is best adapted for agriculture, the high and low being excellent for pasture land.

The pine woods run on the east side, and near the foot of the Cascade range. The climate and soil are admirably adapted for all kinds of grain, wheat, rye, oats, barley, peas, &c. Indian corn does not thrive in any part of this territory where it has been tried. Many fruits appear to succeed well, particularly the apple and pear. Vegetables grow exceedingly well, and yield most abundantly.

The surface of the middle section is about one thousand feet above the level of the first [295] or western section, and is generally a rolling prairie country. That part lying to the north of the parallel of  $48^{\circ}$  is very much broken with mountain chains and rivers, consequently barren and very rugged. From the great and frequent changes in its temperature, it is totally unfit for agriculture, but is well supplied with game of all the kinds which are found in the country.

The mountain chains on the parallel of  $48^{\circ}$  are cut off by the Columbia, as before stated, leaving an extensive rolling country in the centre of the Territory, which is well adapted for grazing.

The southern part of this section is destitute of timber or wood, unless the wormwood (*artimesia*) may be so called. To the northward of the parallel of  $49^{\circ}$  it is covered

with forests. Wheat and other grains grow well in the bottoms, where they can be irrigated. The soil in such places is rich, and capable of producing almost any thing.

The missionaries have succeeded in raising good crops. Stock succeeds here even better than in the lower country. Notwithstanding the severe cold, the cattle are not housed, nor is provender laid in for them, the country being sufficiently supplied with fodder in the natural hay that is abundant [296] everywhere in the prairie, which is preferred by the cattle to the fresh grass at the bottoms.

No attempts at agriculture have been made in the third section, except at Fort Hall. The small grains thrive tolerably well, together with vegetables, and a sufficient quantity has been obtained to supply the wants of the post. The ground is well adapted for grazing in the prairies, and, despite its changeable climate, stock is found to thrive well and endure the severity of the winter without protection.

This section is exceedingly dry and arid, rains seldom falling, and but little snow. The country is partially timbered, and the soil much impregnated with salts. The missionary station on the Koos-koos-ke, near the western line of this section, is thought by the missionaries to be a *wet climate*.<sup>107</sup>

The soil along the river bottoms is generally alluvial, and would yield good crops, were it not for the overflowing of the rivers, which check and kill the grain. Some of the finest portions of the land are thus unfit for cultivation; they are generally covered with water before the banks are [297] overflowed, in consequence of the quick-

<sup>107</sup> Referring to the Lapwai mission, for which see our volume xxviii, p. 338, note 215.—ED.

sands which exist in them, and through which the water percolates.

The rivers of this Territory afford no fertilizing properties to the soil, but, on the contrary, are destitute of all substances. The temperature of the Columbia in the latter part of May was 42°, and in September 68°.

The rise of the streams flowing from the Cascade mountains takes place twice a-year, in February and November, from the rains; that of the Columbia in May and June, from the melting of the snows. Sometimes the rise of the latter is very sudden, if heavy rains occur at that period; but usually it is gradual, and reaches its greatest height from the 6th to the 15th of June. Its perpendicular rise is from eighteen to twenty feet at Vancouver, where a line of embankment has been thrown up to protect the lower prairie; but it has been generally flooded, and the crops in most cases destroyed. It is the intention to abandon its cultivation, and devote it to pasturage.

The greatest rise in the Willamette takes place in February; and I was informed that it rose sometimes twenty to twenty-five feet, [298] and quite suddenly, but soon subsides. It occasionally causes much damage.

Both the Willamette and the Cowelitz are much swollen by the backing of their waters during the height of the Columbia, and all their lower grounds submerged. This puts an effectual bar to their prairies being used for any thing but pasturage, which is fine throughout the year, excepting in the season of the floods, when the cattle are driven to the high grounds.

My knowledge of the agriculture of this Territory it will be well to mention, is derived from visits made to the various settlements, except Fort Langley and Fort Hall.

The Indians on the different islands in Puget's Sound

and Admiralty Inlet cultivate potatoes principally, which are extremely fine, and raised in great abundance, and now constitute a large portion of their food.<sup>108</sup>

At Nisqually the Hudson's Bay Company had fine crops of wheat, oats, peas, potatoes, &c. The wheat, it was supposed, would yield fifteen bushels to the acre. The farm has been two years under cultivation, and is principally intended for a grazing and dairy farm. They have now seventy milch cows, and make butter, &c., to supply their contract with the Russians.

[299] The Cowelitz farm is also in the western section. The produce of wheat is good — about twenty bushels to the acre. The ground, however, has just been brought under cultivation. The Company have here six hundred acres, which are situated on the Cowelitz river, about thirty miles from the Columbia, and on the former are erecting a saw and grist mill. The farm is finely situated, and the harvest of 1841 produced seven thousand bushels of wheat.<sup>109</sup>

Several Canadians are also established here, who told me that they succeeded well with but little work. They have erected buildings, live comfortably, and work small farms of fifty acres.

I was told that the stock on these farms did not thrive so well as elsewhere. There are no low prairie grounds on the river in this vicinity, and it is too far for them to

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<sup>108</sup> Both of these names were assigned by Vancouver in the course of his exploration in 1792. Having entered the Straits of Juan de Fuca he anchored at Port Discovery, and then proceeding west sailed through the great inlet whose opening (passed in 1790) was called by the Spanish navigator Quimper, Canal de Caamano. Vancouver thoroughly explored this arm of the ocean, giving to its southwestern branch the name of Hood's Inlet; and "to commemorate Mr Puget's exertions (in exploring) the south extremity of it I named it Puget's Sound." (Vancouver's *Voyage*, ii, p. 146.)—ED.

<sup>109</sup> For the settlements at Nisqually and Cowelitz see De Smet's *Letters* in our volume xxvii, p. 386, note 203.—ED.

resort to the Kamas plains, a fine grazing country, but a few miles distant. The wolves make sad depredations with the increase of their flock, if not well watched.

The hilly portion of the country, although its soil in many places is very good, is yet so heavily timbered as to make it, in the present state of the country, valueless: this is also the case with many fine portions of [300] level ground. There are, however, large tracts of fine prairie, suitable for cultivation, and ready for the plough.

The Willamette valley is supposed to be the finest portion of the country, though I am of opinion that many parts of the southern portion of the territory will be found far superior to it. The largest settlement is in the northern part of the valley, some fifteen miles above the falls. About sixty families are settled there, the industrious of whom appear to be thriving. They are composed of American missionaries, trappers, and Canadians, who were formerly servants of the Hudson's Bay Company. All of them appeared to be doing well; but I was on the whole disappointed, from the reports that had been made to me, not to find the settlement in a state of greater forwardness, considering the advantages the missionaries have had.

In comparison with our own country, I would say that the labour necessary in this territory to acquire wealth or subsistence is in the proportion of one to three; or in other words, a man must work through the year three times as much in the United States, to gain the like competency. The care of stock, which occupies so much time [301] with us, requires no attention there, and on the increase only a man might find support.

The wheat of this valley yields thirty-five to forty bushels for one sown, or twenty to thirty bushels to the acre; its quality is superior to that grown in the United States, and its weight nearly four pounds to the bushel heavier.



The above is the yield of new land; but it is believed it will greatly exceed this after the third crop, when the land has been broken up and well tilled.

After passing into the middle section, the climate undergoes a decided change; in place of the cool and moist atmosphere, one that is dry and arid is entered, and the crops suffer from drought.

The only wood or bush seen, is the wormwood, (*artemesia*), and this only in places. All cultivation has to be more or less carried on by irrigation.

The country bordering the Columbia, above the Dalles, to the north and south of the river, is the poorest in the territory, and has no doubt led many to look upon the middle section as perfectly useless to man. Twenty or thirty miles on either side of the river are so; but beyond that a fine grazing country exists, and in very many places there are portions of it that might be advantageously [302] farmed. On the banks of the Wallawalla, a small stream emptying into the Columbia, about twenty-five miles from the Company's post, a missionary is established who raises very fine wheat on the low bottoms, by using its waters for the purpose of irrigation. This is also the case at the mission station at Lapwai, on the Koos-koos-ke, where fine crops are raised; grains, vegetables and some fruits thrive remarkably well. In the northern part of this section, at Chimekaine, there is another missionary station. Near the Spokane, and at Colville, the country is well adapted for agriculture, and it is successfully carried on. Colville supplies all the northern posts, and the missionaries in its vicinity are doing well. The northern part of this section will be able to supply the whole southern part with wood. At Colville the changes of temperature are great during the twenty-four hours, but are not injurious to the small grain. The cultivation of fruit has been successful.



FISHERIES.—It will be almost impossible to give an idea of the extensive fisheries in the rivers and on the coast. They all abound in salmon of the finest flavour, which run twice a year, beginning in May [303] and October, and appear inexhaustible; the whole population live upon them. The Columbia produces the largest, and probably affords the greatest numbers. There are some few of the branches of the Columbia that the spring fish do not enter, but they are plentifully supplied in the fall.

The great fishery of the Columbia is at the Dalles; but all the rivers are well supplied. The last one on the northern branch of the Columbia is near Colville, at the Kettle falls; but salmon are found above this in the river and its tributaries.

In Frazer's river the salmon are said to be very numerous, but not large; they are unable to get above the falls some eighty miles from the sea.

In the rivers and sounds are found several kinds of salmon, salmon-trout, sturgeon, cod, carp, sole, flounders, ray, perch, herring, lamprey eels, and a kind of smelt, called "*shrow*," in great abundance; also large quantities of shell fish, viz: crabs, clams, oysters, muscles, &c., which are all used by the natives, and constitute the greater proportion of their food.

Whales in numbers are found along the coast, and are frequently captured by the [304] Indians in and at the mouth of the straits of Juan de Fuca.

GAME.—Abundance of game exists, such as elk, deer, antelope, bears, wolves, foxes, musk-rats, martins, bears and siffleurs, which are eaten by the Canadians. In the middle section, or that designated as the rolling prairie, no game is found. The fur-bearing animals are decreasing in numbers yearly, particularly south of the parallel of 48°; indeed it is very doubtful whether they are sufficiently numerous to repay the expense of hunting them.

The Hudson's Bay Company have almost the exclusive monopoly of this business. They have decreased, owing to being hunted without regard to season. This is not, however, the case to the north; there the Company have been left to exercise their own rule, and prevent the indiscriminate slaughter of either old or young, out of the proper season.

In the spring and fall, the rivers are literally covered with geese, ducks, and other water fowl.

In the eastern section, the buffalo abound, and are hunted by the Oregon Indians, as well as the Blackfeet. Wolves are troublesome to the settlers, but they are not so [305] numerous as formerly. From the advantages this country possesses, it bids fair to have an extensive commerce on advantageous terms with most ports of the Pacific. It is well calculated to produce the following which, in a few years after its settlement, would become its staples, viz: furs, salted beef and pork, fish, grain, flour, wool, hides, tallow, lumber, and perhaps coal. A ready market for all these is now to be found in the Pacific; and in return for them sugar, coffee and other tropical productions, may be had at the Sandwich Islands — advantages that few new countries possess, viz: the facility of a market, and one that in time must become of immense extent.

*Manufacturing power.*— This country, it is believed, affords as many sites for water power as any other, and in many places within reach of navigable waters. The timber of the western section, to the south of 49°, is not so good as that of the north. This is imputed to the climate being milder and more changeable. A great difference is found between the north and south sides of the trees, the one being of a hard and close grain, while the other is open and spongy.

To the north of the parallel 49°, on Frazer's River, an abundance of fine timber [306] for spars of any dimensions is easily obtained.

There will always be a demand for the timber of this country at high prices throughout the Pacific. The oak is well adapted for ship timber, and abundance of ash, cedar, cypress and arbor vitæ, may be had for fuel, fencing, &c.; and, although the southern part of the middle section is destitute of timber, it may be supplied from the eastern or northern sections by water carriage.

Intercommunication would at first appear to be difficult between the different parts of the country, but I take a different view of it.

Stock of all kinds thrive exceedingly well, and they will in consequence always abound in the territory. The soil affords every advantage for making good roads, and, in process of time, transportation must become comparatively cheap.

SETTLEMENTS.—They consist principally of those belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company, and where the missionaries have established themselves. They are as follows: In the western section, Fort Simpson, Fort McLaughlin, Fort Langley, Nisqually, Cowelitz, Fort George, Vancouver, and Umpqua; Fort St. James, Barbine, Alexandria, Chilcothin, Kamloop's, (on Thompson's [307] River); Okanagan, Colville and Wallawalla, in the middle; and in the eastern, Kootanie and Fort Hall. Fort Boise has been abandoned, as has also Kaima, a missionary settlement on the Koos-koos-ke.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> This information concerning Fort Boise was incorrect; see our volume xxviii, p. 321, note 199, and Palmer's *Journal* in our volume xxx, which mentions this post in 1845.

Kamia was a mission established at the mouth of a stream of that name, now called Lawyer's Cañon Creek. Here Rev. Asa B. Smith labored for two years (1839-41) among the upper Nez Percés, compiling with the help of the noted

These are all small settlements, surrounded by palisades, with bastions at their corners, enclosing the houses and stores of the Company, sufficient to protect them against the Indians, but in no way to be considered as forts. A few Indians reside near them, who are dependant for their food and employment on them.

These forts being situated for the most part near the great fisheries, are frequented by the Indians, who bring their furs to trade for blankets, &c., at the same time they come to lay in their yearly supply of salmon.

Vancouver is the principal depot from which all supplies are furnished, and to which returns are made.

At Vancouver, the village is separated from the fort, and nearer the river. In addition to its being the depot of the Hudson's Bay Company, there is now attached to it the largest farm of the Puget Sound Company, the stockholders of which are generally the officers and servants of the Hudson's Bay Company. They have now [308] farms in successful operation at Vancouver, Cowe-litz, Nisqually, Colville, Fort Langley, and the Tualatine plains, about ten miles from Vancouver, all of which are well stocked, and supply the Russian post at Sitka, under contract, with a variety of articles raised on them. They have introduced large herds and flocks into the territory from California, and during our stay there several thousand head were imported.<sup>111</sup> They are thus doing incal-

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chief Lawyer a grammar and dictionary of the Nez Percé language. The hostility of the tribe did not, however, materially abate; the missionaries were denied the right of agriculture and the station was finally abandoned. Lewis and Clark camped near the site of this mission in 1806, on their return journey.—ED.

<sup>111</sup> The Puget Sound Agricultural Company was organized in London (1838) at the instance of Dr. McLoughlin, who perceived the agricultural possibilities of the region and desired to turn them to account for British enterprise. It was a sub-corporation of the Hudson's Bay Company, designed to supply the Russian contracts. Farms were opened at the points stated by Farnham, and large quantities of cattle imported from California. Dr. W. F. Tolmie, who made head-

culable good to the territory, and rendering it more valuable for future settlers. At the same time, this exerts an influence in domesticating the Indians, not only by changing their habits, but food, and attaching them to a locality.

The Indians of the Territory are not a wandering race, as some have asserted, but change for food only, and each successive season will generally find them in their old haunts, seeking it.

The settlements established by the missionaries, are at the Willamette falls and valley, Nisqually and Clatsop, in the western section, and at the Dalles, Wallawalla, Lapwai, and Chimekaine, on the Spokane, in the middle.<sup>112</sup>

Those of the middle section are succeeding well; and although little progress has been made in the conversion of the Indians [309] to Christianity, yet they have done much good in reforming some of the vices and teaching some of the useful arts, particularly that of agriculture, and the construction of houses, which has had the effect, in a measure, to attach them to the soil. The men now rear and tend their cattle, plant their potatoes and corn, which latter they exchange for buffalo meat with those who hunt. The squaws attend to their household, and

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quarters at Nisqually, was manager of the corporation. After the Oregon Treaty (1846) he withdrew the headquarters to Victoria. The farms in Oregon proper were gradually abandoned. Those in the present state of Washington, however, were retained, and were the cause of much friction between the company and the American settlers. In 1864 the commission appointed by the joint governments to settle claims, awarded the Puget Sound Agricultural Company \$750,000 for their land and improvements in lieu of \$5,000,000 claimed by the corporation. The company continued operations in British Columbia until about 1874, but never attained financial success. As a colonizing agency the association in successive years brought (after 1839) several companies of settlers from the Red River colony—a movement which is reported to have alarmed Dr. Marcus Whitman, and to have been one of the causes of his journey (1842-43) to the United States.—ED.

<sup>112</sup> For these mission sites see De Smet's *Letters*, our volume xxvii, pp. 367, 388, 389, notes 187, 208, 209.—ED.

employ themselves in knitting and weaving, which they have been taught. They raise on their small patches, corn, potatoes, melons, &c., irrigating the land for that purpose. There are many villages of Indians still existing, though greatly reduced in numbers from former estimates.

*Population.*—It is extremely difficult to ascertain, with accuracy, the amount of population in the Territory. The Indians change to their different abodes as the fishing seasons come round, which circumstance, if not attended to, would produce very erroneous results.

The following is believed to be very nearly the truth; if any thing, it is overrated:

[310] Vancouver or Washington Island . . .	5,000
From the parallel of 50° to 54° north . . .	2,000
Penn's Cove, Whidby's Island, mainland (Shatchet tribe) . . .	650
Hood's canal, (Suquamish and Toando tribe) . .	500
At and about Okanagan . . .	300
About Colville, Spokane, &c. . .	450
Willamette falls and valley . . .	275
Pillar rock, Oak Point, and Columbia River . .	300
Port Discovery . 150	} Chalams . . . 420
Fort Townsend . 70	
New Dungeness . 200	
Wallawalla, including the Nez-percés, Snakes, &c .	1,100
Killamouks, north of Umpqua . . .	400
Cape Flattery and Queen Hythe to Point Granville, (Classet tribe) . . .	1,250
Blackfeet tribes that make incursions west of the Rocky Mountains . . .	1,000
Birch Bay . . .	300
Frazer's River (Neamitch tribe) . . .	500



Chenooks . . . . .	209
Clatsops . . . . .	220
At the Cascades . . . . .	105
At the Dalles . . . . .	250
Y'Akama River . . . . .	100
[311] De Chute River . . . . .	125
Umpquas . . . . .	400
Roger's [Rogue's] River . . . . .	500
Klamets . . . . .	300
Shastys . . . . .	500
Kallapugus . . . . .	600
Nisqually . . . . .	200
Chikelis and Puget's Sound . . . . .	700
Cowelits or Klakatacks . . . . .	350
Port Orchard . . . . .	150
	<hr/>
	19,154

The whole Territory may be estimated as containing twenty thousand. Of whites, Canadians, and half-breeds, there are between seven hundred and eight hundred, of whom about one hundred and fifty are Americans; the rest are settlers, and the officers and servants of the Company. The Indians are rapidly decreasing in all parts of the country; the causes are supposed to be their rude treatment of diseases, and the dissipated lives they lead.

The white American population, as far as I have been able to judge of them, are orderly, and generally industrious; although they are, with the exception of the missionaries, men who have led, for the most part, dissolute lives.

[312] The absence of spirits, as long as it continues, will probably secure them from excesses. Very much to their credit, they have abandoned the use of spirituous liquors, by consent of the whole community.

I cannot but view this Territory as peculiarly liable



to the vice of drunkenness. The ease with which the wants of man are obtained, the little labour required, and consequent opportunities for idleness, will render it so. The settlers of the Willamette valley have, with a praiseworthy spirit, engaged to prevent the establishment of distilleries, and there are, as yet, no places where spirits can be bought (to my knowledge) in the Territory.

It is highly creditable to the Hudson's Bay Company, that on a vessel arriving on the coast with some spirits on board, in order to prevent its introduction, they have purchased the whole cargo, while, at the same time, their storehouses were filled with rum. They have, with praiseworthy zeal, interdicted its being an article of trade, being well satisfied that it is contrary to their interest, and demoralizing in its effects on all the tribes and people with whom they have to deal, rendering them difficult to manage, quarrelsome among themselves, [313] and preventing their success in hunting. Endeavours have likewise been made by the officers of the Company to induce the Russians, on their side, to adopt this example, and do away with it as an article of trade, but hitherto without success.<sup>113</sup>

<sup>113</sup> The sale of spirituous liquors to Indians, during the days of the competition between the fur-companies (see preface to J. Long's *Voyages* in our volume ii) was so ruinous and dangerous that early in the nineteenth century the North West Company, moved by the exertions of William Wilberforce and other English philanthropists, made strong efforts to discontinue the traffic, and upon its consolidation with the Hudson's Bay Company (1821) the liquor-selling to natives was forbidden. Surreptitiously, however, this was continued, especially upon the seacoast and the Russian frontier. Upon the assassination of John McLoughlin, Jr., at his post at Stikeen, caused by a drunken frolic (1842), Sir George Simpson visited Sitka and entered into an agreement with the Russian governor Adolphus Etholin, to suppress the sale of liquor to the Indians in both Russian and British territory. Meanwhile Dr. McLoughlin at Vancouver, used his best endeavors to stamp out the traffic in Oregon. The vessel purchased (1841) as Farnham here narrates, was the "Thomas H. Perkins" from Salem, Mass. The Oregon provisional government made similar efforts, passing a prohibitory law (1844) under which two incipient distilleries were destroyed. Not until the rush of settlement coming with the gold seekers (1848-50) began, did the liquor traffic gain much foothold.—Ed.

This no doubt has been one of the causes affecting the decrease of tribes, as it was formerly almost the only article of trade.

In the event of the territory being taken possession of, the necessity of circumscribing the use and sale of spirits cannot be too strongly insisted upon by legal enactment, both to preserve order and avoid expense.

As far as the Indians have come under my notice, they are an inoffensive race, except those in the northern parts. The depredations committed on the whites may be traced to injuries received, or arise from superstitious motives.

MISSIONARIES.—Little has yet been effected by them in christianizing the natives. They are principally engaged in the cultivation of the mission farms, and in the care of their own stock, in order to obtain flocks and herds for themselves, most of them having selected lands. As far as my personal observations went, in the part of the [314] country where the missionaries reside, there are very few Indians to engage their attention; and they seemed more occupied with the settlement of the country and in agricultural pursuits than in missionary labours.

When there, I made particular inquiries whether laws were necessary for their protection, and I feel fully satisfied that they require none at present, besides the moral code it is their duty to inculcate.

The Catholic portion of the settlement, who form a large majority, are kept under good control by their priest, who is disposed to act in unison with the other missionaries in the proper punishment of all bad conduct.

I cannot close this report without doing justice to the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company's service for their kind and gentlemanly treatment to us while in the territory, and bearing testimony that, during all my intercourse, and in their dealings with others, they seemed

to be guided by one rule of conduct highly creditable to them, not only as business men, but gentlemen.

They afforded us every assistance that was in their power both in supplies and in [315] means to accomplish our duties. There are many persons in the country who bear testimony to the aid and kindness rendered them in their outset; and of their hospitality it is needless to speak, for it has become proverbial.

To conclude, few portions of the globe, in my opinion, are to be found so rich in soil, so diversified in surface, or so capable of being rendered the happy abode of an industrious and civilized community. For beauty of scenery and salubrity of climate, it is not surpassed. It is peculiarly adapted for an agricultural and pastoral people, and no portion of the world beyond the tropics can be found that will yield so readily with moderate labour, to the wants of man.

THE END

DE SMET'S OREGON MISSIONS AND TRAVELS OVER THE  
ROCKY MOUNTAINS, 1845-1846

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Reprint of New York edition, 1847



OREGON MISSIONS  
and Travels over the  
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in 1845-46.



BY

FATHER P. J. DE SMET.

OF THE SOCIETY OF

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TO THE  
RIGHT REVEREND DR. HUGHES,  
BISHOP OF NEW YORK.

MONSEIGNEUR,

From the distant solitudes of the Rocky Mountains, in the midst of my missions among the Children of the Forests, I had the honor of addressing to you most of the letters contained in this Volume. I may, therefore, I feel, take the liberty of inscribing it to you, not only as a token of veneration for the distinguished qualities and eminent abilities which mark your character and add lustre to your dignity, but, likewise, as a tribute of personal friendship and esteem, with which I am allowed to subscribe myself,

Monseigneur,

Your humble servant,

P. J. DE SMET, S. J.

New-York, April 19th, 1847.



## PREFACE

THE contents of the present volume, from the pen of the celebrated Missionary of the Rocky Mountains, will be found, by the reader, to be fraught with extraordinary interest. The manners and customs of the North American Indians — their traditions, their superstitions, their docility in admitting the maxims of the gospel, and the edifying lives of thousands who have received the grace of baptism and instruction, are described with a freshness of coloring, and an exactness of detail, that will render them invaluable not only to our own times, but, especially, to posterity. He travels through those vast and unexplored deserts, not merely as a missionary, filled with the zeal which characterized the apostles of the primitive Society to which he belongs, but with the eye of a poet, and an imagination glowing with a bright yet calm enthusiasm. Hence the exquisite descriptions of scenery, of incidents, of events; descriptions which breathe the spirit of a mind imbued with the loftiest conceptions of nature, and chastened with the sacred influences of faith.

[xii] The reverend author having, before his recent departure for his native land, left the supervision of this work to my care, I feel bound, in justice to his modesty, to state, that the Introduction, taken from the Catholic Almanac, is not from his pen: and he is not, therefore, accountable for the epithets of praise (so eminently deserved, and yet so repugnant to his humility), which, through it, are occasionally coupled with his name.

The lithographic sketches that accompany this Volume, are copied from the original drawings of the Reverend

Father Point, S. J.;<sup>1</sup> drawings of such exquisite perfection, that they would do honor to any master: and the more admirable, from the circumstance of their having been executed with the pen, in the midst of the privations and difficulties of his remote and arduous missions.

In conclusion, I cannot but express the pleasure, instruction, and edification, I have derived from the careful perusal of these beautiful letters: and I feel convinced that they will prove, to all who read them, a source of interest and delight which few volumes of the same dimensions can open to the intellectual and Christian reader.

C. C. P.

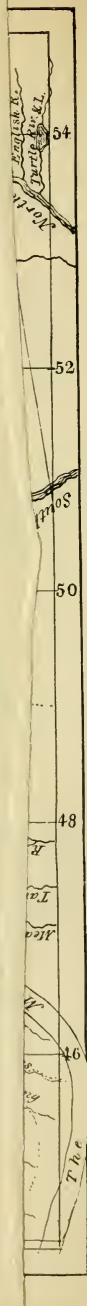
New-York, August 1st, 1847.

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<sup>1</sup> For a brief sketch of Father Nicolas Point see De Smet's *Letters* in our volume xxvii, p. 192, note 67.—ED.







## OREGON MISSIONS

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### AN OUTLINE SKETCH OF OREGON TERRITORY AND ITS MISSIONS

THE political discussion, which has been going on for years between the British government and that of the United States, in regard to the boundary which defines their respective portions of the Oregon territory, has turned upon this distant region a large share of public attention, and has won for it an interest which will increase in proportion to the advances of civilization and commerce within its borders. But it becomes an object of much deeper interest in the eyes of the philanthropist and Christian, when we look to the efforts which have been made, and which are still continued, in order to diffuse the blessings of religious truth among [14] its benighted inhabitants. To the Catholic, especially, does this remote country present the most pleasing scenes for contemplation, and by this reason we have been induced to lay before the reader, a brief account of its discovery and settlement, and of the missions undertaken for the spiritual welfare of its inhabitants.

Oregon territory is that important part of North America which extends from the 42d to the 50th degree of N. latitude, and from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean.<sup>2</sup> It is bounded on the north by the Russian possessions, and on the south by California; forming a kind of parallelogram, about seven hundred and fifty miles in length

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<sup>2</sup> On the boundaries of Oregon consult our volume xxviii, p. 29, note 1. By the Oregon Treaty (1846) the northern boundary was fixed at the parallel 49°; north of this was British, not Russian, territory. The writer of this introductory matter seems not to have been well informed.— Ed.



## OREGON MISSIONS

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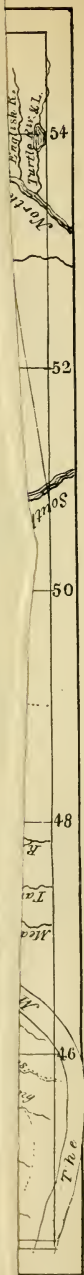
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and five hundred in breadth, and containing 375,000 square miles.

There appears no reason to doubt of the Spaniards having been the first to visit this country.<sup>3</sup> The documents we possess, and the tradition of the natives, concur to render this opinion incontestible. According to them a vessel made its appearance south of the Columbia river before 1792, and there is still living among them a woman whose father was one of the crew attached to the vessel, and whose mother belonged to the tribe of the Kilamukes.<sup>4</sup> When we add to this that crucifixes have been [15] found in their hands transmitted to them from their ancestors, that the island of Vancouver still exhibits the ruins of colonial habitations, that the strait which separates it from the mainland bears the name of *Juan Fuca*, and that the country itself is contiguous to California, where the Spanish missionaries had penetrated nearly two hundred years before, we cannot but look upon the Spaniards as the discoverers of Oregon.

After the voyage of Captain Cook in 1790, by which it was ascertained that the sea along the N. W. coast of America abounded in otters, this region was visited by vessels from almost every part of the world. The people of the United States were not behind others in enterprise; in 1792, Captain Gray sailed up an unknown river of that country, to the distance of eighteen miles, and the stream has since retained the name of *Columbia*, from the ship which he commanded. In leaving the river, Captain Gray passed the vessel of Captain Vancouver, who also

<sup>3</sup> For the early Spanish explorations of the Northwest Coast see Farnham's *Travels* in our volume xxviii, pp. 30-32, including notes 3-9.—ED.

<sup>4</sup> Compare with this Franchère's *Narrative* in our volume vi, pp. 248, 249; see also H. S. Lyman, *History of Oregon* (New York, 1903), i, pp. 167-174, where the traditions of descendants from early castaways are collected. The Tillamook (Kilamuke) Indians are noted in our volume vi, p. 258, note 67.—ED.



navigated the Columbia river about one hundred miles, to the point which bears his name. In 1793 the country was visited by Sir Alexander McKenzie, after discovering the river which retains his name.<sup>5</sup> In 1804, Messrs. [16] Lewis and Clark were commissioned by the United States to explore the sources of the Columbia, and they descended the river as far as Gray's Bay. A few years after, in 1810, Mr. Astor fitted out two expeditions to Oregon, for the purpose of securing the interest of the fur-trade in those parts. The party that had embarked by water arrived first, and erected a fort called Astoria, about nine miles from the mouth of the Columbia.<sup>6</sup> The company of the North-West (English) also considered the fur-trade of Oregon as well worthy of attention, and they immediately despatched an agent by land for the purpose of securing it; but he arrived at Astoria several months after the first expeditions from the United States.

During the war of 1812, a British vessel sailed to the Columbia, in order to take possession of Astoria and its treasure; but the captain was cruelly disappointed in discovering that the place was already held by an agent of the North-West Company, who had purchased it in anticipation of the future war with the United States.<sup>7</sup> The Canadians who had settled there under its original owners, were employed by the new proprietors, and their numbers increased in proportion as the Company extended its [17] operations. In this way the country was visited

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<sup>5</sup> For Cook's discoveries (1778-79, not 1790) see our volume xxviii, p. 31 note 6; for Gray, Vancouver, and Mackenzie, our volume vi, pp. 183-185, notes 1, 2, 4.—ED.

<sup>6</sup> For the Lewis and Clark expedition see Thwaites, *Original Journals* (New York, 1905). The Astorian enterprise is narrated in Franchère's *Narrative* and Ross's *Oregon Settlers*, volumes vi and vii of our series.—ED.

<sup>7</sup> See Franchère's *Narrative* in our volume vi, pp. 294-303; and Ross's *Oregon Settlers* in our volume vii, pp. 244-250.—ED.

in every direction, and many of the Indian tribes heard from them of the Catholic religion and the worship of the true God. In 1821, the North-West and Hudson Bay Companies united their interests, and gave a new impulse to the fur-trade. Mr. John McLaughlin, who went to Oregon in 1824, was chiefly instrumental in promoting the prosperity of the country.<sup>8</sup> He added to the business posts, and gave employment to a greater number of Canadians and Iroquois. They commenced at the same time the cultivation of wheat. One of the settlers having undertaken, in 1829, to till the soil in the valley of Willamette, his example was soon followed by others, and the colony became so numerous that in 1834 an application was made to Dr. Provencher, Vicar Apostolic of Hudson Bay, to procure a clergyman for the service of the people.<sup>9</sup> The colonists, however, did not succeed in obtaining a favorable answer to their petition, until the following year, when two clergymen were appointed for the mission; but, owing to the arrival of a Methodist preacher and of an Episcopalian minister in Oregon, the former in 1834, and the latter in 1837,<sup>10</sup> the departure of the Catholic clergymen was considerably [18] delayed. Rev. Mr. Demers went as far as the Red River in 1837, and arrangements having been made for himself and fellow-

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<sup>8</sup> For McLoughlin see Townsend's *Narrative* in our volume xxi, p. 296, note 81.—ED.

<sup>9</sup> See, on the Willamette settlement, De Smet's *Letters* in our volume xxvii, p. 386, note 203; on Provencher, *ibid.*, p. 391, note 213.—ED.

<sup>10</sup> The Methodist here mentioned was Jason Lee, who went out in 1833; see our volume xxi, p. 138, note 13. The Episcopalian clergyman was Rev. Herbert Beaver, who was sent as chaplain by the Hudson's Bay Company on their vessel the "Nereid," arriving at Vancouver in August, 1836. Although having formerly served in the West Indies, Beaver did not find it easy to adapt himself to frontier life, and for his officious criticisms incurred the dislike of the gentlemen at Fort Vancouver. After eighteen months of service he returned to England, and the company sent no more chaplains to the Northwest.—ED.

laborer to pass into Oregon the following year, Rev. F. N. Blanchet left Canada at the appointed time, and joined his companion at Red River, whence they both started on the 10th of July, and after a perilous journey of between four and five thousand miles, and the loss of twelve of their fellow-travellers in the rapids of Columbia River, they arrived at Fort Vancouver, the 24th of November, of the same year.<sup>11</sup> On their route the two missionaries were treated with the utmost courtesy by the traders whom they met, and at Vancouver they were received with every demonstration of respect by James Douglas, Esq., who commanded that post during the absence of Mr. McLaughlin in England.<sup>12</sup> On seeing the missionaries at length among them, the Canadians wept for joy, and the savages assembled from a distance of one hundred miles, to behold the *black gowns* of whom so much had been said.

Before we follow the ministers of God in their apostolic labors, we shall allude as briefly as possible to the aspect of the country, to the difficulties and dangers it presents to the missionary, [19] and to its commercial and agricultural resources.

We shall observe, in the first place, that the Columbia River stretches from its mouth about 290 miles to the east, as far as Fort Walla Walla; it then takes a northerly direction 150 miles, to Fort Okanagan; thence it extends 170 miles easterly to Colville. Fort Vancouver, the principal post in Oregon, is situated in 45° 36' N. latitude, about one hundred miles from the mouth of the Columbia, and on its western bank, in ascending the river. The Willamette is a tributary of the Columbia, falling

<sup>11</sup> For these two priests see De Smet's *Letters* in our volume xxvii, pp. 320, 369, notes 164, 189.—ED.

<sup>12</sup> See our volume xxviii, p. 380, note 242, for account of Douglas.—ED.

into it four miles below Vancouver on the opposite side. Twenty miles up the stream is a cascade of about twenty-five feet, and thirty miles further is a Canadian establishment, which in 1838 numbered twenty-six Catholic families, besides the settlers from the United States. The residence of the Methodist minister was ten miles higher up.<sup>13</sup> The River Cowlitz falls into the Columbia thirty miles below Vancouver, on the same side. Forty-five miles from its mouth is seen the establishment which bears its name. Four Catholic families resided here on the arrival of the missionaries. From this place to [20] Nesqually at the southern extremity of Puget Sound, the distance is nearly seventy miles, and it is equally far from the latter point to the island of Whitby.<sup>14</sup> Two days' journey further north will bring you to the River Frazer, on which Fort Langley is situated.<sup>15</sup> This river falls into Puget Sound or the Gulf of Georgia.

The mission of St. Mary's among the Flatheads is ten days' journey from Colville, towards the south-east, and about five hundred miles from Vancouver.<sup>16</sup> The most distant to which Mr. Demers has penetrated as yet, is Bear Lake in New Caledonia,<sup>17</sup> seven hundred miles

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<sup>13</sup> The Catholic settlement was that known as French Prairie; the Methodist establishment is described in De Smet's *Letters*, our volume xxvii, p. 388, note 208.—ED.

<sup>14</sup> The Cowlitz and Nisqually settlements are noted in our volume xxvii, p. 386, note 203.

Whidbey (not Whitby) is a large island in Puget Sound, which was named (1792) in honor of Joseph Whidbey, one of Vancouver's subordinates, who first circumnavigated it. The permanent American settlement thereon began in 1851, and prospered because of its fertile open prairie land.—ED.

<sup>15</sup> For Fort Langley see note 75 (Farnham), *ante*, p. 58.—ED.

<sup>16</sup> The site and founding of this mission is described in De Smet's *Letters*, our volume xxvii, pp. 281-284.—ED.

<sup>17</sup> Bear Lake, frequently called Lake Connolly, was the site of the Hudson's Bay post of that name founded about 1826 among the Sekanais Indians. It is somewhat north of latitude 56° near the source of Stuart River.—ED.

from Vancouver. The reader may form some idea of the almost insurmountable difficulties to be encountered by our two missionaries, in visiting their various posts, so widely distant from each other, especially in a country overrun in every direction by lofty mountains. These mountains generally extend from north to south. From the Valley of Willamette are seen three elevated peaks, which have the form of a cone, and are covered with perpetual snow; hence called *Snowy Mountains*. One of them Mt. St. Helena, stands opposite Cowlitz to the east, and for some years past has been noted for its volcanic [21] eruptions.<sup>18</sup> Besides the rivers we have mentioned, there are several others, the principal of which are the Clamet, Umpqua, and the Chikeeles.<sup>19</sup> The Columbia is navigable as far as the cascade, fifty-four miles above Vancouver.

The immense valleys in Oregon Territory, covered with extensive and fertile prairies, follow the course of the mountains from north to south, and are crossed in different directions by rivulets bordered with trees. They easily yield to the plough, and though the first crop is not very abundant, the second is generally sufficient to repay the labor of tillage. The soil is for the most part fertile, particularly in the south. Every kind of grain is successfully cultivated near Cowlitz, Vancouver, in the Willamette Valley, and further south. The same may be said of the neighborhood of Fort Walla Walla, Colville; the mission of St. Mary's; the mission of the

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<sup>18</sup> Mt. St. Helena was measured by Captain Wilkes, and was made 9,550 feet.—EDITOR OF CATHOLIC ALMANAC.

*Comment by Ed.* For Mount St. Helens see our volume vi, p. 246, note 50.

<sup>19</sup> For the Klamath (Clamet) see note 56 (Farnham), *ante*, p. 46; the Umpqua is noted in our volume vii, p. 231, note 82; the Chehalis, note 103 (Farnham), *ante*, p. 81.—ED.

Sacred Heart, of St. Ignatius, and St. Francis Borgia, among the Pend-d'oreilles; of St. Francis Regis, in the valley to Colville; of the Assumption and the Holy Heart of Mary, [22] amongst the Skalsi. Other districts that are not tillable, afford an excellent pasture for cattle.

As to the climate of Oregon, it is not so severe as might be supposed from its elevated latitude. The snow never falls to a greater depth than three or four inches in the lower portions of the territory, and seldom remains long on the ground. When the snows, after having accumulated on the mountains and their vicinity in consequence of extreme cold, begin to melt, and the heavy rains supervene, the plains around are covered with water, and sometimes considerable damage is caused by the inundation. The rains commence in October, and continue until March with little interruption. The very cold weather lasts only for a few weeks. In the month of June the Columbia always overflows its banks, from the thaw which takes place on the mountains, and every four or five years its waters rise to an extraordinary height, and do much injury in the vicinity of Vancouver.

Until the year 1830, the Territory of Oregon was thickly settled by numerous tribes of Indians; but at that period the country bordering on the Columbia was visited by a fatal scourge which carried off nearly two-thirds of [23] the inhabitants.<sup>20</sup> It showed itself in the form of an infectious fever, which threw the individual into a state of tremor, and produced such a burning heat throughout the body, that the patient would sometimes cast himself into the water to obtain relief. The population of entire villages was cut off by this terrible pestilence. Other villages were burnt in order to arrest the infection which would have arisen from the pile of dead bodies

<sup>20</sup> For this epidemic see note 84 (Farnham), *ante*, p. 68.—ED.



that were left unburied. During this fearful visitation, which attacked the colonists as well as the natives, Dr. McLaughlin displayed the most heroic philanthropy, in his laborious attention to the sick and dying. The Indians superstitiously attributed this scourge to a quarrel between some agents of the Hudson Bay Company and an American captain, which led the latter to throw a species of charm into the river by way of revenge. The fever, however, made its appearance annually, though in a less malignant form; and the inhabitants have discovered both its preventive and its remedy. The smallpox is the principal disease that alarms the natives; they are in continual dread of it, and imagining that they have a short time to live, they no longer build the large and convenient cabins to [24] which they were formerly accustomed. Notwithstanding the ravages above mentioned, the population of Oregon amounts to nearly 110,000 souls, residing chiefly in the north. This part of the country, fortunately, escaped the diseases which decimated the inhabitants of Willamette and the Columbia, and still rages from time to time in the south.

The tribes of this territory differ much in character and personal appearance. The savages who frequent the coast, especially towards the north, are of a much more barbarous and ferocious temperament than those of the interior; nor are they less dissimilar in their manners, customs, language, and external features. The tribes and languages are almost as numerous as the localities. From twenty-five to thirty different idioms have been distinguished among them, a circumstance which increases in no small degree the labors of the missionary. In the interior of the country, the natives are of a mild and sociable disposition, though proud and vindictive; intelligent though inclined to indolence. Their belief



in the immortality of the soul consists in admitting a future existence, happy or unhappy, that is, a state of plenty or want, according to the merits or demerits of [25] every individual. The morals of this savage race can scarcely be termed corrupt, considering their very limited means of "*enlightenment*." They have distinct ideas of right and wrong, and recognize many leading principles of the natural law. Theft, adultery, homicide, and lying, are condemned as criminal, and if polygamy is tolerated, it is not approved; it is principally confined to the chiefs, by way of maintaining peace with the neighboring nations. Laxity of morals is far short of what might be supposed inevitable, in their rude and uneducated state. Modesty, indeed, would require more; but its rules are for the most part respected. But little intercourse is carried on among young persons of different sex, and even in regard to matrimonial unions, the engagement is arranged by the parents of the parties. When a man of comfortable means takes to himself a wife, he is obliged to compensate the parents of the latter by considerable presents. But upon the death of the woman, these presents may be reclaimed. If in consequence of harsh treatment she puts an end to her existence, the circumstance reflects disgrace upon the husband, who is compelled, in this case, to propitiate her parents by additional gifts.

[26] Most of the work among these savages is performed by slaves, who are well treated, except in case of old age or other inability, when they are left to perish of want. Besides those who are born in this unhappy state, there are others who become so, by the fortunes of war. All prisoners are considered slaves by their conquerors, though, in general, only their children experience this hard lot. Wars are sometimes engaged in for the ex-

press purpose of acquiring slaves, which is considered a great advantage among the savages. The white population have little to fear from their attacks, except on the northern coast, where life is far from being safe, and where the natives, in some cases anthropophagi, do not hesitate to feast upon the flesh of their prisoners.

Throughout the whole country, the habitations of the Indians are rather huts than houses, from fifteen to twenty-five feet long, proportionably wide, and verging into a conical form. Cross pieces of wood are suspended in the interior for the purpose of drying their salmon and other articles of food. Fire is kindled on the ground in the centre of the cabin, the smoke escaping through the roof above. The dress of the Indians is not more *recherché* than their [27] dwellings. Formerly they clothed themselves very comfortably and neatly, with the furs which they possessed, but since the trade in skins has become so extensive, the natives of Oregon are much worse provided for in this respect, and the poor can scarcely protect themselves against the severity of the seasons. To this circumstance, in part, is attributed the decrease of the population, which has been observed within a few years past. Hunting and fishing are the resources on which the Indian depends for subsistence. His principal food is salmon, sturgeon, and other kinds of fish, with the ducks, wild turkeys and hares, in which the country abounds. The fruits of spontaneous growth, and particularly the root of the *cammas*, also afford them nourishment.<sup>21</sup>

Among the aborigines of Oregon there is no trace of any religious worship. They have a belief which consists in certain obscure traditions;<sup>22</sup> but no external forms

<sup>21</sup> On the *camas* consult our volume xxi, p. 247, note 61.—Ed.

<sup>22</sup> The Chinook and Kilamuke tribes on the coast call their most powerful

of religion are visible among them. The juggler exercises his [28] profession, though it is almost universally done in behalf of the sick, for the purpose of curing them. If he fail in his attempt, he is suspected of having used some evil influence, and is made to pay the forfeit of his supposed offence. Though nearly all these tribes, of whom we are speaking, possess no particular form of worship, they are naturally predisposed in favor of the Christian religion, especially those who live in the interior. We shall find the most ample evidence of this in the sequel of our narrative.

At the period when the two Catholic missionaries arrived in Oregon territory, the Hudson Bay Company possessed from ten to twelve establishments for the fur-trade, in each of which there was a certain number of Canadians professing our holy faith, and in addition to these there were twenty-six Catholic families at Willamette, and four at Cowlitz. It is easy to imagine to how many dangers they had been exposed of losing their faith, deprived as they were of religious instruction and of every external incentive to the practice of piety, and surrounded by individuals who were not inactive in their efforts to withdraw them from the fold of Catholicity.

The Methodist missionaries had already formed [29] two establishments, one in the Willamette, where they had a school, and another about fifty miles from the cascade. An Anglican minister, who resided at Vancouver two years, left it before the arrival of the Catholic clergy. The Presbyterians had a missionary post at Walla Walla, and among the Nez-percés, and in 1839 they established a third station on the river Spokane, a few days' journey

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god by the name of Ikani, and to him they ascribe the creation of all things. The god who made the Columbia river and the fish in it they call Italupus.—*Expl. Exp.*, vol. v., p. 119.—ED. OF CATHOLIC ALMANAC.

south of Colville.<sup>23</sup> In 1840, the Rev. Mr. Lee brought with him fellow-laborers for the vineyard, with their wives and children, and a number of husbandmen and mechanics. It was a real colony. The preachers stationed themselves at the most important posts, as at Willamette Falls, the Clatsops below fort George, and Nisqually, and thence visited the other settlements: they even penetrated as far as Whitby.<sup>24</sup> Nothing short of the most arduous toil and constant vigilance on the part of the Catholic clergymen, could have withdrawn so many individuals from the danger of spiritual seduction. Our two missionaries were indefatigable in their exertions, almost always journeying from one post to another, to begin or to consolidate the good work they had in view.

[30] Vancouver was the first place that experienced the happy influence of their apostolical zeal. Many of the settlers had lost sight of the religious principles they had imbibed in their youth, and their wives were either pagans in belief, or, if baptized, but superficially acquainted with the nature of that holy rite. In this state of things, which had given rise to many disorders, the missionaries found it necessary to spend several months at Van-

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<sup>23</sup> For the sites of the Methodist missions see De Smet's *Letters*, in our volume xxvii, p. 388, note 208. Our author here refers to the Willamette and Dalles missions. For the Presbyterian missions consult our volume xxi, p. 352, note 125; De Smet's *Letters*, our volume xxvii, p. 367, note 187; and Farnham's *Travels*, in our volume xxviii, pp. 333, 338, notes 210, 215.—ED.

<sup>24</sup> This was known as the "great re-inforcement," and was secured by Jason Lee on his return to the United States in 1838-39. The bark "Lausanne" was chartered, and inducements held out not only to missionaries but to farmers and mechanics, to volunteer for this movement. The expense incurred was \$42,000, and in addition thereto a sum was said to have been contributed by the federal government from the secret service fund. (H. H. Bancroft, *History of Oregon*, i, p. 171.) Fifty-two persons set sail from New York October 10, 1839, arriving in the Columbia the following May, and, as our author here indicates, soon scattering to various posts. This formed the nucleus of the American colony in Oregon.—ED.

couver, and to labor with united energies in instructing the people, baptizing children, performing marriages, and inspiring a greater respect for the Christian virtues. With this view they remained at Vancouver until the month of January, 1839, when Mr. Blanchet visited the Canadians at Willamette. It would be difficult to describe the joy which his arrival awakened among them. They had already erected a chapel seventy feet in length, which was dedicated by the missionary under the invocation of St. Paul. His ministry at this place was attended with the most signal success. Men, women and children, all seemed to appreciate the presence of one who had come, as a messenger from Heaven, to diffuse among them the [31] consolations of religion. Before his departure, Mr. Blanchet rehabilitated a good number of marriages, and baptized seventy-four persons. In April he started for Cowlitz, where he remained until the latter end of June. Here also his efforts were most successful. He had the happiness of instructing twelve savages of Puget sound, who had come from a distance of nearly one hundred miles in order to see and hear him. It was on this occasion he conceived the idea of the Catholic *ladder*, a form of instruction which represents on paper the various truths and mysteries of religion in their chronological order, and which has proved vastly beneficial in imparting catechetical instruction among the natives of Oregon.<sup>25</sup> These twelve Indians having remained at Cowlitz long enough to acquire a knowledge of the principal mysteries of our faith, and to understand the use of the *ladder* which Mr. Blanchet gave them, set about instructing their tribe as soon as they returned home, and not without considerable success; for Mr. Blanchet, the

<sup>25</sup> For this symbolical catechism and its explanation see De Smet's *Letters*, in our volume xxvii, pp. 403-411.—ED.

following year, met, in the vicinity of Whitby island, with several Indians who had never seen a priest, and yet were acquainted with the sign of the cross, and knew several pious canticles.

[32] While Mr. Blanchet was at Cowlitz,<sup>26</sup> his fellow-laborer visited Nisqually, where he found the savages in the best dispositions. Having but a short time, however, to pass among them, he merely laid the foundation of a more important mission, and returned to Vancouver by the month of June,—the time when the agents from New Caledonia, Upper Columbia, and other different posts assemble there to deposit their furs. After spending a month at Vancouver, availing himself of the favorable opportunity for instruction which the concourse of visitors afforded, he set out for Upper Columbia, where he visited Walla Walla, Okanagan and Colville,<sup>27</sup> baptizing all the children that were brought to him in the course of his journey. He spent three months in this excursion, during which Mr. Blanchet attended to the wants of the faithful at Vancouver, Willamette, and [33] Cowlitz. Though these stations afforded ample occupation for a missionary, Mr. B. paid another visit to Nisqually, where he was again met by a considerable number of savages from Puget sound, who hastened to Nisqually as soon as they heard of his arrival, and listened with joy and profit to the words of life.

<sup>26</sup> Speaking of the farm belonging to the Hudson Bay Company at Cowlitz, Capt. Wilkes says: "The grounds appear well prepared, and were covered with a luxuriant crop of wheat, (May, 1841). At the farther end of the prairie was to be seen a settlement, with its orchards, &c., and between the trees, the chapel and parsonage of the Catholic mission gave an air of civilization to the whole. The degree of progress resembles that of a settlement of several years' standing in our western states," &c.—*Explor. Exped.*, vol. iv., p. 315.—ED. OF CATHOLIC ALMANAC.

<sup>27</sup> For these Hudson's Bay posts see respectively, De Smet's *Letters*, our volume xxvii, p. 330, note 166; Franchère's *Narrative*, in our volume vi, p. 260, note 71; and Townsend's *Narrative*, in our volume xxi, p. 278, note 73.—ED.



In October the two missionaries met at Vancouver, which was their place of residence through the courtesy of James Douglas, Esq., and on the 10th of the same month they again separated, Mr. Blanchet starting for Willamette, and Mr. Demers for Cowlitz. Their object was to spend the winter months at these points in the further instruction of their flocks. During the first year they baptized three hundred and nine persons. The following spring Mr. Demers visited the Chinouks, a tribe living below fort George.<sup>28</sup> From the Chinouks he repaired to Vancouver, to meet the concourse of traders who assemble there in the month of June, after which he set out for his stations at Walla Walla, Okanagan and Colville, as he had done the preceding year. About this time Father De Smet, S. J., was sent on a visit by his superior to the Flathead Indians, who had implored this favor by repeated deputations from their country to [34] the bishop of St. Louis. He found, to his great surprise, that Oregon already possessed two Catholic missionaries; he wrote to Mr. Demers, informing him that he would return to St. Louis, according to the order of his superiors, to procure further aid for the promising missions of the Rocky Mountains.

Mr. Blanchet having visited the people at Nisqually, was soon called away by a special embassy from the Indians of Puget sound, who requested his ministry. It was on this occasion at Whitby that he met with the savages already acquainted with certain practices of the Catholic church, though they had never seen a missionary.<sup>29</sup> His

<sup>28</sup> For Fort George see note 74 (Farnham), *ante*, p. 57. The Chinook are described in our volume vi, p. 240, note 40.—ED.

<sup>29</sup> Of the Catholic mission at Penn's cove, between Whitby's Island and the main, Mr. Wilkes says: "It (the island) is in possession of the Sacket tribe, who have here a permanent settlement, consisting of large and well-built lodges of timber and planks. . . . This whole tribe are Catholics, and have much affection



labors among the Indians at this place were most consoling. A large cross was erected as a rallying-point, many children were [35] baptized, and two tribes, who were at war with each other, were reconciled. The Catholic *ladder* was passed from one nation to another, and all prayed to be instructed still more fully in the truths of salvation. After baptizing one hundred and four persons, the missionaries returned to Vancouver, and thence repaired to their respective stations during the winter season. A wide field was here opened to their zeal, not only among the catechumens who solicited baptism, but among the settlers, who were anxious to repair by their fervor the neglect of former years. In the summer of 1840 the Columbia was visited by Captain Belcher, from England, for the purpose of surveying the river.<sup>30</sup>

In the spring of 1841, Mr. Demers, after giving the usual mission at Vancouver, went to Nisqually, and with the aid of Indian guides penetrated as far as Fort Langley

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and reverence for their instructors." After speaking of the good feeling promoted among the Indians by the Catholic clergymen, he continues: "Besides inculcating good morals and peace, the priests are inducing the Indians to cultivate the soil, and there was an enclosure of some three or four acres, in which potatoes and beans were growing."—ED. OF CATHOLIC ALMANAC.

<sup>30</sup> Sir Edward Belcher (1799-1877) of the British navy was born at Halifax, Nova Scotia, entered the navy in 1812, and was commissioned a lieutenant in 1818. He became an expert in surveying and charting, and was thus employed (1825-28) in the Pacific Ocean on H. M. S. "Blossom." In 1836 he was appointed to the command of the man-of-war "Sulphur," which was sent to the Pacific on a surveying expedition, and incidentally on account of the British difficulties with the Russian settlements of Alaska. In 1839 (not 1840) he surveyed the coast from San Francisco Bay to the Columbia, entering the latter with two men-of-war, "Sulphur" and "Starling," and surveying as far as Fort Vancouver. Belcher's relations with the Hudson's Bay official in charge were not cordial, and he criticized both the unmilitary appearance of Fort Vancouver and Dr. McLoughlin's attitude toward the American missionary colonists. On the return journey, Belcher's ships were detained on the coast of China by the war in those parts. An account of the voyage was published in London (1843), and the same year Belcher was knighted. He cruised in Oriental waters from 1842-47. In 1852-54 he commanded an Arctic expedition searching for Sir John Franklin.—ED.

on the river Fraser. Here he was surrounded by an immense number of savages, to whom he announced without delay the tidings of salvation. His appeal was not in vain, all permitting their children to be baptized, and soliciting the residence of a priest among them. Seven hundred children received, on this occasion, the sacrament [36] of regeneration. While Mr. Demers was thus occupied in gathering the first fruits of the mission at Puget sound, Mr. Blanchet was equally engaged at Wilamette, Vancouver, Cowlitz and the Cascades. At the last mentioned place several children were baptized, and a number of adults instructed in the faith.

During the year 1841, Oregon Territory was visited by two expeditions, one from England under Sir George Simpson,<sup>31</sup> and the other from the U. States, under the command of Captain Wilkes.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Sir George Simpson, born in Ross-shire, Scotland (1792), was in a merchant's office in London, 1809-20. In the latter year he came to America, having charge during the winter of 1820-21 of a Hudson's Bay post on Lake Athabasca. Upon the coalition of the rival fur-companies, the North West and Hudson's Bay (1821), Simpson was chosen governor for the northern department, a position filled with acceptability until his death in 1860. He made two expeditions to the Northwest Coast, the first by canoe in 1828. In 1841-42 he journeyed entirely around the world. Leaving Liverpool in March, 1841, he reached Fort Garry in the Red River country (the modern Winnipeg), in May, whence the trip across the plains and mountains to Fort Colville was made by horses. Proceeding down the Columbia to Vancouver, Sir George visited California and Alaska, returning overland across Siberia, and reaching London after an absence of nineteen months. His adventures were published as *A Narrative of a Journey around the World, 1841-42* (London, 1847). For a recent study of Simpson see George Bryce, *Makers of Canada* (Toronto, 1905), ix. Simpson met Wilkes at Vancouver, and speaks of the pleasure it gave him. See Farnham's *Travels*, ante, p. 72, note 88.—ED.

<sup>32</sup> "We stopped for a few hours at the Catholic mission," says Capt. Wilkes, "to call upon the Rev. Mr. Bachelet (Blanchet), to whom I had a note of introduction from Dr. McLaughlin; he received me with great kindness. Mr. B. is here settled among his flock, and is doing great good to the settlers in ministering to their temporal as well as spiritual wants. . . . Mr. Drayton, Michael, and myself, dined with Mr. B. on oatmeal porridge, venison, strawberries and cream. His hospitality was tendered with good and kind feelings, and with a gentlemanly deportment that spoke much in his favor, and made us regret to leave his company

[37] Faithful to his word, Father De Smet returned among the Flatheads in the autumn of the same year, accompanied by the Rev. Fathers Point and Mengarini, and three lay brothers.<sup>33</sup> The mission of St. Mary's was at once established, and the most abundant harvest collected, (see Indian sketches).<sup>34</sup> About the same time Messrs. Blanchet and Demers retired to their usual winter stations, where they had the pleasure of learning that two other missionaries, Messrs. John B. Bolduc and Ant. Langlois had [38] set out from Canada to join them in their labor of love.<sup>35</sup> During the winter, Mr. Blanchet narrowly escaped a watery grave, in ascending the river Willamette on a visit to his friend Mr. Demers. In the

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so soon." Mr. Wilkes represents the missions here and the farms of the Canadians, in a thriving state. He has incorrectly given the name *Bachelet* to Mr. Blanchet, superior of the Oregon mission, who was recently consecrated vicar-apostolic of that country.—*Explor. Exp.*, vol. 4, p. 350.

Of the Methodist mission at Willamette, Mr. Wilkes says: "About all the premises of this mission there was an evident want of the attention required to keep things in repair, and an absence of neatness that I regretted much to witness. We had the expectation of getting a sight of the Indians on whom they were inculcating good habits, and teaching the word of God: but with the exception of four Indian servants, we saw none since leaving the Catholic mission."—*Ibid.* p. 351, 2. At this latter mission he numbers four or five hundred natives. The Methodists had a school of twenty pupils at some distance.

Near Port Orchard the chapel of the Catholic mission is 172 feet long by 72 wide. "Many of the natives," says Mr. Wilkes, "are capable of saying their prayers and telling their beads, and some were met with who could sing some Catholic hymns in their own language."

Of the Protestant missions at Clatsop, Capt. Wilkes observes: "There appeared to me to be little opportunity for exercising their ministerial calling, though I understood afterwards that at particular seasons a number of Indians collected to hear them."—Vol. iv., p. 322.—ED. OF CATHOLIC ALMANAC.

<sup>33</sup> See our volume xxvii (De Smet), pp. 192, 193, notes 67, 69, 70.—ED.

<sup>34</sup> Identical with De Smet's *Letters* published in our volume xxvii.—ED.

<sup>35</sup> These two missionaries were refused passage in the annual Hudson's Bay Company's brigade, and came to Oregon by sea, arriving in September, 1842. Langlois was placed in charge of the Willamette mission and the seminary of St. Joseph. Bolduc, who had formerly served in Polynesia, relates *post* his experiences in Vancouver Island and vicinity.—ED.

spring of 1842, Father De Smet unexpectedly made his appearance at Vancouver, after a providential escape from shipwreck, in descending the river Columbia. Fortunately he had left the barge in which his fellow-travellers and his baggage were; and by this means he was saved, while his effects and five of his companions were swallowed up in the rapids.<sup>36</sup>

The three missionaries met together, first at Willamette, and then at Vancouver, and formed their plans for a concert of action in the great work of evangelizing the natives of Oregon. The Indians of New Caledonia had repeatedly asked for Catholic missionaries, and Mr. Demers started for that country. Having embarked in a boat of the Hudson Bay Company, he reached his destination after a travel of two months. The journey, though fatiguing, was most consoling in its results. He was received by the savages with open arms, and it is impossible to describe the ardor with which they drank in the words of heavenly life as they fell from his [39] lips. The Indians in this region appear to be no less predisposed to receive the truths of Christianity than the Flatheads, who have evinced a peculiar propensity to virtue.

While Mr. Demers was so successfully occupied among the tribes of New Caledonia, Father De Smet was bending his steps back to St. Louis, to procure additional laborers for the mission. Two clergymen, the Rev. Fathers De Vos and Hoeken,<sup>37</sup> with three lay brothers, were immediately

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<sup>36</sup> See De Smet's account in his *Letters*, our volume xxvii, pp. 374-376.—ED.

<sup>37</sup> H. M. Chittenden and A. T. Richardson, in *Father De Smet's Life and Travels* (New York, 1905), give the following information with regard to these fathers: Peter De Vos was born in Ghent in 1797; coming to America in 1836 he went in 1842 to reinforce the mission of St. Mary's in Montana. He served there and in the Willamette valley for eight years, when he was transferred to the College of Santa Clara, California, where he died April 17, 1859.

Father Adrian, younger brother of Father Christian Hoeken, was born in

sent out, but they did not reach their destination until the autumn of 1843. Mr. De Smet was at the same time despatched to Europe, to make further provision for the conversion and civilization of Oregon. In this way Mr. Blanchet found himself charged with the care of all the stations, except those among the Flatheads, and upper Indians of the Columbia, and was continually moving about to meet the wants of the various missions. Fortunately Messrs. Langlois and Bolduc, after a journey of one year since their departure from Canada, arrived at Willamette on the 16th of September. They at once set themselves to work, Mr. Langlois remaining at Willamette during the winter season, while Mr. Blanchet was at Vancouver, [40] and Mr. Bolduc at Cowlitz. In the spring of 1843, Mr. Demers returned from New Caledonia, much exhausted by the labors he had undergone, and the privations he had suffered during his journey; but these causes were not capable of diminishing his missionary ardor. His fellow-laborers and himself found ample occupation, during the summer months, at the three principal stations, and in fact such was the call upon their services at these posts, and in the vicinity, in consequence of the increasing numbers of their flock, that they were unable to visit the more distant points, and were obliged to defer to a later period the execution of their design, for some time contemplated, of forming a mission at Whitby.

In addition to his numerous cares, Mr. Blanchet undertook the erection of an academy at Willamette, for which funds had been given by a Mr. Joseph Laroque of Paris,

Holland in 1815. His mission service was connected with St. Ignatius at its first site in 1844-54, and at the present site in 1854-59. In the latter year he re-opened the abandoned Blackfeet mission, returning the following year (1860) to the East, where he spent his later life, dying at Marquette College, Milwaukee, April 19, 1897.—ED.

and which is called St. Joseph's College, in honor of that gentleman.

A teacher of French, and another of the English language, were employed in the institution, which was opened in the month of October, and numbered from the very commencement [41] twenty-eight boarders. Rev. Mr. Langlois, who attended to the Willamette mission, also superintended the Academy.

About a year after, a public examination of the students was held, and the inhabitants who attended, appeared much gratified at the progress made by the pupils in the study of French and English, in writing, arithmetic, and other branches.

In the spring of 1844, Mr. Blanchet withdrew Mr. Demers from Cowlitz and placed him at the *Falls* or Oregon City, an important post, which contained already sixty houses. The parsonage where Mr. Demers resided could not be rented at less than ten dollars a month. Mr. Bolduc remained at Cowlitz, and Mr. Blanchet went from one station to another, to ascertain and provide for the wants of the different localities.

During the vacation of the college Mr. Blanchet remained at Willamette, to replace Mr. Langlois, who had set out upon a visit to the Jesuit fathers, among the Flat-heads, with a view to obtain some assistance for his school. Mr. Demers was at this time at Vancouver. The missionaries, not aware of Mr. De Smet's voyage to Europe, had been long and anxiously awaiting his arrival in Oregon. About fifteen [42] months had elapsed since his departure for the east, and the vessel of the Hudson Bay Company, which had reached Oregon in the spring, brought no intelligence respecting his movements. Under these circumstances, Mr. Blanchet and his companions began to be alarmed, when, in the midst of their apprehen-



sions, the indefatigable Jesuit made his appearance suddenly at Vancouver, about the beginning of August. On the 9th of January, he had left Belgium, with four priests, Rev. Fathers Accolti, Nobili, Ravalli, and Vercruysse and Huybrechts a lay brother,<sup>38</sup> and six religious ladies of Notre Dame of Namur, and after doubling Cape Horn the vessel touched at Valparaiso and Lima, for the purpose of obtaining some information regarding the entrance of the Columbia River and to leave a part of a cargo.<sup>39</sup> Not having received a satisfactory answer to their inquiries, they set out again for the north, and continued their

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<sup>38</sup> Michele Accolti was born at Bari, Italy, in 1806. Having been educated at Rome, he entered the Society of Jesus in 1832, and accompanying De Smet to Oregon remained there until 1851 in charge of various parishes both north and south of the Columbia. About 1851 Accolti removed to San Francisco, and in 1853 went to Rome for reinforcements for the newly-founded Jesuit college at Santa Clara. Returning thither in 1855 he served as pastor for ten years, when he was transferred to San Francisco, where he died November 6, 1878.

Giovanni Nobili was a native of Rome (1812). After six years in Oregon he was transferred to California, and died at Santa Clara, March 1, 1856. See *post* for the account of his journey to New Caledonia, where he was known as "Petit Père," because of his small stature.

Antonio Ravalli was born in Ferrara in 1812. After entering the Jesuit order (1827) he taught for some years in Turin and neighboring cities, before coming to Oregon with Father de Smet. His first station was at St. Ignatius, whence he went to Fort Colville, removing shortly to St. Mary's in the Bitterroot valley where so much of his life was spent. When St. Mary's was abandoned (1854), Father Ravalli removed to the Sacred Heart mission, returning three years later to the Colville region. In 1860 he retired to Santa Clara, California, where for three years he was master of novices. But his heart was in the mountains, whither he returned and labored until his death, October 2, 1884. Father Ravalli was much beloved in Montana. For illustration of his monument see L. P. Palladino, *Indian and White in the Northwest* (Baltimore, 1894), p. 55.

Aloysius Vercruysse was born at Courträi, Belgium, in 1806. He served chiefly at St. Ignatius mission, being transferred to Santa Clara in 1863. Thence, because of failing health, he was sent home to Belgium, where he died July 17, 1866.

Brother Francis Huybrechts died at the Cœur d'Alène mission April 5, 1872, aged seventy-four years.—ED.

<sup>39</sup> De Smet gives a detailed account of the voyage and the visit to Valparaiso and Lima, in the first letter in his *Western Missions and Missionaries* (New York, 1863). See also Chittenden and Richardson, *De Smet*, ii, pp. 408-436.—ED.



course until they found themselves in latitude  $46^{\circ} 19'$ , and longitude  $123^{\circ} 54'$ . Here the captain passed three days in discovering the mouth of the river, which was at length made known to him by the sight of a vessel going out. Though it was growing dark, he immediately despatched an officer towards the sail to make inquiries concerning [43] the mode of entering the Columbia; but he did not return with the required information, and the captain, being thrown upon his own resources, at once made preparations for entering the river, and proceeded from east to west through a channel altogether unknown to him. It was the 31st of July, feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola. As he advanced, by the soundings, he found that the vessel was in very shallow water, having only two and a half feet under her keel, although at a considerable distance from the mainland. At this moment, the safety of the vessel and crew seemed hopeless; but while shipwreck was staring them in the face, they fell unexpectedly into deeper soundings; the bar was crossed, and two hours after, the vessel anchored off Fort George or *Astoria*.<sup>40</sup> [44] Mr. Blanchet and the people of Willamette no sooner heard of Mr. De Smet's arrival at Vancouver than they hastened to meet him. The good father and the colony that accompanied him, were received with every demonstration of civility by Dr.

<sup>40</sup> On the bar of the Columbia River occurred the wreck of the *Peacock*, one of the vessels attached to the Exploring Expedition. A thrilling account of this event is given in Capt. Wilkes' Narrative. Of the bar itself he says: "Mere description can give little idea of the terrors of the bar of the Columbia; all who have seen it have spoken of the wildness of the scene, and the incessant roar of the waters, representing it as one of the most fearful sights that can possibly meet the eye of the sailor. The difficulty of its channel, the distance of the leading sailing marks, their uncertainty to one unacquainted with them, the want of knowledge of the strength and direction of the currents, with the necessity of approaching close to unseen dangers, the transition from clear to turbid water, all cause doubt and mistrust. Under such feelings, I must confess that I felt myself laboring."— Vol. iv., p. 293.— ED. OF CATHOLIC ALMANAC.

McLaughlin and Mr. Douglas, who also tendered one of the company's boats to convey the missionary band to Willamette. Their journey to this place was a real triumph, such was the joy and excitement produced among the inhabitants by the accession of these new laborers to the vineyard. The sisters [of] *Notre Dame* soon occupied the building which had been undertaken for their purposes, and in the month of December it was opened as a boarding academy for girls. Father De Smet, about the same time, directed his course towards the Flatheads, Father Devos having come to supply his place in the south. The labors of the Jesuits among the tribes of the north have been crowned with the most abundant success. In 1842, a new mission, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, was founded about eight days' journey south of St. Mary's.<sup>41</sup> In addition to the increased resources [45] which the mission received in 1844, we must mention also the arrival of two other Jesuit Fathers and one lay brother, who went to Oregon, by the way of the Rocky Mountains.<sup>42</sup>

Such was the state of the country, and such the progress of religion among the natives and colonists, when Mr.

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<sup>41</sup> For this mission see De Smet's *Letters* in our volume xxvii, p. 365, note 184. The direction from St. Mary's is northwest, not south.—ED.

<sup>42</sup> These were Fathers Zerbinati and Joset, and Brother Magri, whom De Smet met in his journey eastward preparatory to sailing for Europe, and who had been sent as reinforcement by the Jesuit authorities abroad. They went forward to the frontier, arriving at the mission late in 1843.

Pietro Zerbinati remained at St. Mary's mission, where he was accidentally drowned late in the summer of 1845.

Joseph Joset was of Swiss origin. He reinforced the Cœur d'Alène mission, where he resided for many years, serving both the government and the cause of the Indians in the war of 1858. He was frequently stationed at Colville, and for some years served a church in Spokane. In 1891 he returned to the Cœur d'Alène mission, dying at De Smet in 1900.

Brother Vincent Magri was a skilled mechanic, and had charge of milling operations at St. Ignatius. Later he was sent to the Cœur d'Alène mission, where he died June 18, 1869.—ED.

Blanchet received letters from Canada in November last, informing him that, upon the application of the Fifth Provincial Council of Baltimore, he had been appointed Vicar Apostolic of Oregon Territory, and that bulls to that effect, dated the 1st December, 1843, had been despatched to him. He was immediately solicited by his fellow-laborers to accept the charge, and at first determined to go to California for the ceremony of consecration. But desirous of obtaining a further reinforcement for his extensive mission, he concluded to visit Europe. Having appointed Rev. Mr. Demers his *Vicar General* and *administrator* of the Vicariate during his absence, he left Vancouver towards the end of November, arrived on the 22d of May at London, and thence embarking for this country the 4th of June, in the Cunard line of steamers, he reached Canada on the 24th of the same month, after a journey of more than 22,000 miles. Mr. Blanchet recently received [46] the episcopal consecration in Montreal, and has gone to Europe on business connected with his mission. Six thousand savages brought within the fold of the Christian church, form, indeed, but a small number among the 100,000 who inhabit that immense region; but this success, achieved in a few years, by a missionary force so limited, and compelled to grapple with so many difficulties, is a bright and consoling evidence of what can and will be accomplished by those who have been commissioned to "go and teach all nations."

On the 1st of December, 1843, his Holiness, Gregory XVI, erected Oregon Territory into an Apostolic Vicariate, and the Rev. Francis N. Blanchet, was appointed to the episcopal charge of this extensive mission. His consecration took place in Montreal, C. E., about the middle of the year 1844. He immediately repaired to Europe, with a view to increase the resources of his mission, and

to devise means for promoting the interests of religion in Oregon. At his request, and by a recent act of the Holy See, the Territory of Oregon, from the 42d to the 54th degree of N. latitude, has been divided into eight dioceses, viz: Oregon City, Nesqually, Vancouver's Island, and Princess Charlotte, [47] on the coast, and Walla Walla, Fort Hall, Colville, and New Caledonia, in the interior. These dioceses form an ecclesiastical province, of which Oregon City is the Metropolitan See. For the present, only three bishops are appointed for the province, viz: those of Oregon City, Walla Walla, and Vancouver's Island, who will have a provisional jurisdiction over the other dioceses. The episcopal districts of *Vancouver's Island*, *Princess Charlotte*, and *New Caledonia*, are not included within the territory belonging to the United States. The Rt. Rev. Modest Demers, one of the missionaries that visited Oregon in 1838, has been charged with the See of Vancouver's Island, and the administration of the two other districts in the British portion of the territory. The region within the limits of the United States embraces the five other dioceses above-mentioned.

### ARCHDIOCESS OF OREGON CITY

This district is under the jurisdiction of the Rt. Rev. F. N. Blanchet, who has also the administration of Nesqually.

### DIOCESS OF WALLA WALLA

This diocese is under the charge of the Rt. [48] Rev. Magloire Blanchet, who was consecrated in Montreal, on the 27th of September, 1846. He has also the present administration of Fort Hall and Colville.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Augustine Magloire Alexander Blanchet, younger brother of Archbishop Blanchet, was born near Quebec in 1797, educated in that city, and consecrated to the priesthood in 1821. For some years he served as missionary on islands

The following clergymen are engaged in the missions of Oregon:—

Rev. Accolti, Michael,	Rev. Nobili, John,
“ De Smet, Peter J.,	“ Point, Nicholas,
“ De Vos, Peter,	“ Ravalli, Anthony,
“ Hoecken, Adrian,	“ Vercruysse, Aloysius,
“ Joset, Joseph,	“ Langlois, Anthony,
“ Mengarini, Gregory,	“ Bolduc, John Baptist,

Who are all, with the exception of the last two, members of the Society of Jesus.

Archbishop Blanchet lately embarked from Europe, on his way to Oregon, with ten secular priests and two regulars, three lay brothers of the Society of Jesus, and seven female religious, for the wants of the mission. The total number of clergymen is twenty-six.

[49] Our information is not sufficiently detailed, to allow us to present the religious statistics of the different diocesses into which Oregon has been divided. We can only state in general, that since the year 1845, several new stations have been formed, new churches erected, and a large number of the aborigines of various tribes converted to the true faith.

The state of religion is as follows: there are eighteen

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in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and at Cape Breton; then he returned to parish work, being arrested on a charge of participating in the Papineau revolt. No evidence to that effect being adduced, he was released, and was serving as canon of Montreal cathedral when called by his brother (1844) to be bishop of Walla Walla. After consecration as herein described, he set out for his diocese by way of St. Louis, first having declared his intention of becoming a citizen of the United States. Blanchet arrived on the Walla Walla September 5, 1847, shortly before the Whitman massacre. The Catholics were accused, doubtless unjustly, of having instigated that event, whose horrors they sought to mitigate. Blanchet was obliged to abandon the Cayuse mission, and in 1850 was made bishop of Nisqually, a diocese which later (1853) was co-extensive with Washington Territory. He established his headquarters at Vancouver, where was inaugurated a long litigation of the land claim of the church. Bishop Blanchet resigned in 1878, dying in retirement February 15, 1887.—ED

chapels, viz.: five in the Willamette Valley; St. Paul's Cathedral; St. Mary's at the Convent of the Sisters; St. Francis Xavierius' Chapel; the new Church in the Prairie; St. John's Church in Oregon City; one at Vancouver; one at Cowlitz; one at Whitby; four in New Caledonia, to wit: at Stuart's Lake, at Fort Alexandria, at the Rapids, and at the Upper Lake; St. Mary's Church among the Flatheads; the Church of the Sacred Heart among the Pointed-Hearts; the Church of St. Ignatius among the Pend-d'oreilles of the Bay; the Chapel of St. Paul among the Kettle-Fall Tribe near Colville. The following are stations of 1846, where chapels are to be erected, to wit: St. Francis Borgia among the Upper Kalispels; St. Francis Regis in Colville Valley; St. Peter's at the great Lakes of the Columbia; the Assumption [50] among the Flatbow Indians; the Holy Heart of Mary among the Koetenais.

The institutions that have been commenced in Oregon, consist: 1st, of the school of St. Mary's among the Flatheads; 2d, of a college at St. Paul's, Willamette; and 3d, of an academy for girls at the same place, under the charge of six sisters of Notre Dame. Other establishments are soon to be commenced.

The total number of Indians in the territory is about 110,000, of whom upwards of 6,000 have been converted to the true faith. The number of Catholics among the Canadians and settlers amounts to about 1,500.





No. I  
LETTER OF MR. BOLDUC, APOSTOLICAL  
MISSIONARY

TO MR. CAYENNE.

Cowlitz, 15th Feb., 1844.

SIR,— Nearly a year has elapsed since I had the satisfaction of addressing you. During that period, I have made many new excursions, of which I now intend giving you an account.

From the observations made by the first English navigators who visited the coasts of America towards the north of the Columbia River, it appears that the territory bearing the same name, was formerly discovered and peopled by Spaniards. Even at the present day, we find ruins of birch edifices, constructed for the purpose of drawing the savage nations to the knowledge of the gospel. Among the natives, relics have been found attesting this fact; a certain tribe has possessed for ages a brazen crucifix, bearing the appearance of great antiquity, when, how, and by whom it was brought thither, none can tell. It is probable it [52] may have been introduced at that period, when the Spaniards seized on California, and formed a settlement on Vancouver's Island, separated from Terra Firma by the strait of Juan de Fuca.<sup>44</sup> Gray discovered the Columbia River; Vancouver ascended it to the point whereon is built the fort that bears his name, and took possession of the surrounding country.

The vast territory extending between the Rocky Moun-

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<sup>44</sup> Bolduc probably refers to the Spanish settlement at Nootka Sound; see Farnham's *Travels* in our volume xxviii, pp. 32, 33, notes 8 and 10.—ED.

tains and the Pacific Ocean is divided into two zones, differing in their climate, soil and productions. The line of separation runs parallel to the coasts of the South Sea, from which it is distant about 200 miles. Less woody than the regions of the West, the eastern part rises into table-land, which forms the basis of the Mounts Hood, St. Helena, Reigner, and Baker.<sup>45</sup> The summits of these mountains rise to the height of 15 or 16,000 feet, and are crowned with eternal snow. Last year, Mounts St. Helena and Baker became volcanoes. The latter, within the last few months, has undergone considerable changes on the side where the crater was formed.

In the oriental zone the climate is dry and salubrious; in winter as well as summer, rain is very rare. Snow never covers the earth [53] more than a foot deep; no marshy land is to be found; and the air being neither foggy nor misty every species of fever is totally unknown. In the inferior part, from October to March, the rains are continual; thick clouds envelope the atmosphere, and hide the sun for entire weeks. When the vapours no longer obscure the air, a mild and vivifying heat is diffused around. This winter has been quite remarkable by the small quantity of rain. During the greater part of February and the beginning of March, the weather was delightful, we could have imagined ourselves in May. The grass was verdant in the meadows, and strawberries were in full bloom.

In March, rain seldom falls; a glowing sun reanimates nature, which soon appears in her gayest attire. Wheat sown in autumn surpasses in April, that which we are accustomed to behold in Canada in the month of June.

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<sup>45</sup> For Mounts Hood and St. Helens see our volume vi, pp. 246, 248, notes 50, 54; for Baker and Rainier, see notes 29, 30 (Farnham), *ante*, p. 33.—ED.

During summer, the weather is clear and sultry, sometimes, however, thick clouds gather around, and appear as if they would burst in torrents over our heads, but they are soon dissipated without thunder, and without shedding on the earth a drop of that moisture which she seems to require to perfect her harvest.

[54] In June, the rivers, swollen by the melted snow, inundate the plains, and increase the stagnant water formed by the rains of winter. The vapors arising from the influence of a meridian sun, cause fever and ague, which are more frequent when the rivers overflow their banks. This malady reigns throughout the country from the end of August to the middle of October, and persons once attacked generally suffer from its baneful effects for several years; and as I have not escaped this year, I have every reason to dread a recurrence in the future. You could scarcely credit the relation of the terrible ravages which this epidemic causes among the numerous tribes inhabiting the shores of the Columbia. Entire camps have been swept away by this fatal scourge. When the savages find themselves attacked by it, they hasten to plunge into the cold rivers, and die immediately. The whites with proper attention baffle the distemper.

I informed you last year, that I intended opening a mission at Puget Sound; and hoped, if possible, to reach Vancouver's Island; this project has been executed, and I will now give you a few details.

To attain this object, I thought it better not [55] to go alone on the island; no priest had as yet trodden the soil, and the savages were little familiarized with the whites. Happily, the Hon. Hudson Bay Company was about constructing a fort at the southern extremity of the island. Mr. Douglas, the director of this expedition, generously invited me to take my passage on board his

vessel. Most willingly did I accept the kind offer, and quitted Cowlitz 7th of March, for Shwally.<sup>46</sup> The Steamboat Beaver awaited us some days; for, having several preparations to make, we did not get on board before the morning of the 13th. After having pursued our course during the day, towards evening we cast anchor in still water, at a place named Pointe Perdrix, formed by a projection of the Isle Whitby.<sup>47</sup> Fishing lines were soon prepared, and we had the satisfaction of procuring an excellent dinner for the next day. We caught a quantity of beautiful fish, not unlike the cod of Canada, some of them were four feet in length.

The waters of Puget Bay are richly stocked; salmon abound, and form one of the principal resources of the natives. In July, August and September, more are taken than can be consumed. A small fish, peculiar to the north-western [56] coast is here found; it comes up the rivers in spring, and contains such a quantity of oil, that when dried and lit by the tail it burns like a candle. From this fish the savages extract excellent oil, which they use for seasoning their food.<sup>48</sup> Early on the 14th we raised anchor and directed our course towards Juan de Fuca Strait. We landed, and after having visited a small camp of savages, belonging to the Tribe of Klalams,<sup>49</sup> we bore away for the southern point of Vancouver's Island,

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<sup>46</sup> For the Cowlitz settlement see De Smet's *Letters*, in our volume xxvii, p. 386, note 203. "Shwally" is a form for Nisqually, described in the same note.—ED.

<sup>47</sup> Still known as Partridge (Perdrix) Point, on the west side of Whidbey Island, opposite Penn Cove.—ED.

<sup>48</sup> The eulachon (*Thaleichthys pacificus*), commonly known as the candlefish. It is of the smelt order, and has a delicious flavor. See a drawing by Capt. William Clark in *Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, iv, frontispiece.—ED.

<sup>49</sup> For the Clallam consult De Smet's *Letters* in our volume xxvii, p. 387, note 207.—ED.

whither we arrived about 4 o'clock in the afternoon.<sup>50</sup> At first, only two canoes were perceived; but, after a discharge of cannon, we saw the natives issuing from their haunts and surrounding the steamboat. Next morning, the pirogues (Indian boats) came from every side. I went on shore with the commander of the expedition and the captain of the vessel; having received unequivocal proofs of the good-will of the Indians, I visited their village situated six miles from the port, at the extremity of the bay.

Like the surrounding tribes, this one possessed a little fortress, formed by stakes enclosing about 150 square feet.<sup>51</sup> The inhabitants endeavor to secure themselves in this manner from the incursions of the Toungetats, a powerful [57] and warlike tribe; one part of which encamps on Vancouver's Island, the other on the continent, north of Frazer's River.<sup>52</sup> These ferocious enemies enter the villages by night, massacre all the men, and carry off the women and children whom they reduce to slavery. On my arrival, all the tribe, men, women and children,

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<sup>50</sup> For Vancouver Island see Farnham's *Travels, ante*, p. 75, note 91. The expedition landed in Camosun Bay. A manuscript journal of Sir James Douglas forms the basis of the account in H. H. Bancroft, *History of British Columbia* (San Francisco, 1887), pp. 92-116.—ED.

<sup>51</sup> These were the Songhies, a tribe of Coast Salishan stock, inhabiting the region around Victoria. For a detailed description of this tribe see Franz Boas in *Report of British Association for the Advancement of Science*, 1890, pp. 563-582. Boas gives the proper tribal name as Lkuñgen, and says the term Songhies (Songish) is derived from one of their septs. As Bolduc reports, they lived in the long board houses with carved posts, and enclosed their village with palisades. There are about a hundred of this tribe extant under the charge of the Cowichan agency.—ED.

<sup>52</sup> This was a band of Cowichan Indians, named for their chieftain Tsoughilam (Toungetats). The Cowichan are a large subdivision of the Coast Salishan tribe, occupying the east coast of Vancouver Island, and up the Fraser River as far as Yale; see *Report of British Association for the Advancement of Science*, 1894, pp. 454-463. See also an account of the attack of this tribe on the newly-erected Fort Camosun in H. H. Bancroft, *British Columbia*, pp. 106-110.—ED.

assembled to shake hands with me; a ceremony which these savages never omit. They repaired to the great lodge belonging to their chief, where I spoke to them concerning the existence of a God, the Creator of all things; of the recompense promised to good actions, and the eternal chastisements which await the commission of crime. My instructions were often interrupted by the harangues of my auditors. The following one may prove interesting: "Chief, listen to my words; ten years ago, I heard that there was a Master above, who hated evil; and that among the French, men were to be found who taught the knowledge of this Master. I also heard that men of this description would come to our home. Since that time, my heart, which was formerly very wicked, has become good; I no longer do evil; and since you are come, all hearts are filled with joy."

[58] Another day, whilst I was speaking of baptism, and recounting to them that several nations had caused their children to be baptized, a man arose and said: "Thy words are good, but we have been told that all who were baptized among the Kwaitlens, and the Kawitskins (near Frazer River), died immediately;<sup>53</sup> however, since thou sayest it is a good thing, we believe thee. If the sacred water will cause us to see the Great Master after death, baptize all our camp; perform this charity, for they nearly all die." I promised I would return the following Sunday, and confer the sacrament.

My arrival being noised abroad, several neighboring nations came hither in crowds. Saturday, the 18th, was employed in constructing a kind of repository, whereon to celebrate mass the ensuing morn. Mr. Douglas gave me several of his men to aid in the work. Branches of

<sup>53</sup> The former tribe was probably the Kwantlums, a branch of the Cowichan family, occupying the lower Fraser valley about Fort Langley and above.—ED.



fir-trees formed the sides of this rustic chapel; and the awning of the boat, its canopy. Early Sunday morning, more than twelve hundred savages, belonging to the three great tribes, Kawitskins, Klalams, and Isanisks, were assembled in this modest sanctuary.<sup>54</sup> Our commander neglected nothing that could render the ceremony imposing; he gave me liberty to [59] choose on board, all that could serve for its decoration. He assisted at the mass with some Canadians, with two Catholic ladies. It was in the midst of this numerous assembly, that, for the first time, the sacred mysteries were celebrated; may the blood of the Spotless Lamb, fertilize this barren land, and cause it to produce an abundant harvest. This being the day fixed for the baptism of the children, I repaired to the principal village accompanied by all who had assisted at the divine service. On arriving, I was again compelled to present my hand to about 600 persons. The children were arranged along the sea-coast; I distributed to each a small piece of paper with a name written thereon; and immediately commenced the ceremony. It was about ten o'clock in the morning, and I did not finish before night, the new Christians numbered 102. Though much exhausted, I was obliged to walk two leagues to rejoin the steamboat.

According to the plan traced out for our voyage, we were to remain here but a few days; and then continue our course from fort to fort, until we arrived at the Russian establishment at Sitka,<sup>55</sup> but the little vessel bearing the provisions, came not. This delay grieved me [60] much, for the grand vicar had communicated to me his intention of establishing at the beginning of summer, a mission

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<sup>54</sup> For Kawitskins (Cowichan) and Klalams (Clallam), see *ante*, p. 148, note 49; for Isanisks (Songhies), p. 149, note 51.—ED.

<sup>55</sup> For the founding of Sitka see our volume vi, p. 258, note 68.—ED.



in Whitby Isle, and also of employing me in this work of zeal. Fearing I would not return in time if I delayed my departure, I resolved immediately to retrace my steps. I purchased a canoe, and engaged the chief of the Isanisks and ten of his men to conduct me direct to Whitby Isle. I quitted Vancouver the 24th of March, bearing with me the most lively sentiments of gratitude towards the commander of the expedition and Captain Brothie, for all their kind and delicate attentions. The sea was calm, but the atmosphere clouded; luckily, I took with me a compass, otherwise I should have strayed from my course, having twenty-seven miles to traverse. The first day we reached a little island between the extremity of Vancouver and the continent where we passed the night.<sup>56</sup> My Indians, having shot a sea-wolf, made a great feast. You would scarcely believe how much a savage can devour at a repast; but if he is voracious in time of plenty, he knows how to fast several successive days without enduring much fatigue.

The 25th there arose a strong north-westerly breeze. The rowers, before quitting the coast, [61] ascended a hill to ascertain if the sea was much agitated in the middle of the strait; they were some time before they could decide the point; at last they declared, that with the aid of a sail, we might brave the danger. A mast was prepared, a blanket affixed to it, and thus equipped we confided ourselves to the mercy of the waves. Towards three o'clock we landed at the isle of Whitby; not, however, without experiencing some danger.

A great number of savage Klalams and Skadjats came to meet us; I knew, by reputation, the chief of the Skadjats, and asked to see him.<sup>57</sup> They replied that he had left

<sup>56</sup> Lopez Island, between Rosario Straits and Canal de Haro.—ED.

<sup>57</sup> Bishop Blanchet had previously visited Whidbey Island; see *ante*, p. 120.

two days previously, to meet me at Vancouver's island. His two sons presented themselves; one of them, pressing my hand, said, "My father, Netlan, is not here, he is gone to Ramoon (this is the name of the southern point of Vancouver's island); when he learns thou art here he will soon return. He will be delighted if thou wilt remain among us, for he is tired saying '*Mass*' every Sunday, and preaching to these people." Later, I was informed that his *Mass* consisted in explaining to the savages of his tribe the chronological history of religion (traced on a map), in teaching them to make [62] numberless signs of the cross, and singing a few canticles with the *Kyrie Eleison*.

I pitched my tent near the cross planted by Mr. Blanchet when he first landed in the island, in 1840. The next morning all the camp of the Skadjats surrounded me to hear the word of God. You may form some idea of the population of this tribe when I tell you, that I gave my hand to a file of 650 persons, besides 150 others who had passed the night near my tent not included in this number: and nearly all the old men and women, besides the children, had remained in their huts. After the instruction, several canticles were chanted in such full chorus that the sound was deafening.

Several parents had begged me to baptize their children. I repaired to the village and requested to see all the children, under seven, who had not received the grace of regeneration. Not one was forgotten; there were 150 present.

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The Skagit Indians were a tribe of Salishan origin inhabiting the territory in the neighborhood of Skagit Bay and on the river of that name. In 1855 they took part in the treaty of Point Elliott, and were assigned to the Swinomish Reservation at the mouth of Skagit River. The Indians on this reservation number about two hundred and fifty; they are partly civilized, wear civilized dress, speak English, hold allotted lands, and are largely members of the Roman Catholic church.—ED.

The ceremony took place in a little meadow, surrounded by lofty and antique fir-trees. It was not 12 o'clock when I began the administration of the sacrament, and I did not finish before sun-set. The day was most beautiful, but the ardent rays of the sun, joined to the want of a substantial breakfast, caused me to [63] suffer much by a violent headache. The 27th, the chief of the Skadjats declared to me that I ought not to be lodged in a cotton house (under a tent); "for this reason," added he, "tomorrow thou must tell me in what place we shall construct thee an abode, and thou wilt see how powerful is the effect of my words when I speak to my people." Beholding the good-will of the chief, I pointed out a little eminence. Immediately afterward I saw two hundred workmen, some having hatchets to fell the trees, others preparing to remove them; four of the most skilful undertook the arrangement of the edifice. In two days all was terminated, and I found myself installed in a house 28 feet long by 25 in width. The wood was rough, the roof covered with cedar-bark, and the interior overlaid with rush mats. During the week I gave them several instructions, and taught them some canticles—for without singing, the best things are of little value; noise is essential to their enjoyment.

I had terminated the exercises of the mission, when several savages arrived from the continent; as soon as they perceived me, they cast themselves on their knees, exclaiming, "Priest, priest, during four days we have travelled to [64] behold thee, we have walked night and day, and have scarcely tasted any food; now that we see thee our hearts are joyful, take pity on us; we have learned that there is a Master on high, but we know not how to speak to him. Come with us, thou wilt baptize our children as thou didst those of the Skadjats." I was

moved by these words, and would willingly have followed them to their forests, but it was impossible to do so, my intended arrival having been announced at Skwally. I quitted these good Indians the 3d April; during my abode among them I experienced nothing but consolations which surpassed all my expectations.

By this relation you will perceive, sir, that the savages of Puget Bay show much zeal for religion, yet they do not understand the full extent of the term. If to be a Christian it were but necessary to know some prayers, and sing canticles, there is not one among them who would not adopt the title; but a capital point still to be gained is, a reformation of morals. As soon as we touch this chord, their ardor is changed into indifference. In vain the chieftains harangue their inferiors; how can they expect to make any impression where they are themselves the more guilty!

[65] I do not mistrust Divine Providence, but I may say, without exposing myself to illusion, that our best hopes are centred in the tribes inhabiting the coasts of the ocean, or which are settled at the mouth of the numerous tributaries.

Sir, I have the honor to remain,

Your very humble and obedient

servant in Jesus Christ,

*J. B. Z. Bolduc,*

Apostolical Missionary.

## No. II

A. M. D. G.

Sainte Marie du Willamette, 9th October, 1844.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—On the 28th July, after a tedious navigation of nearly eight months, we came in sight of the

Oregon Territory. Oh! with what transports of delight we hailed these long-desired shores. What heartfelt thanksgivings burst from every tongue. All, with one accord, intoned that magnificent hymn of praise, the "Te Deum." But these moments of happiness were not of long duration; they were succeeded by others, of deep anxiety, as the remembrance of the perils yet to be encountered flashed upon our minds. We were approaching the "Columbia." The entrance into this river is difficult and dangerous, even for seamen provided with good charts; and our captain, unable to procure any, was, we know, entirely unacquainted with the rocks and breakers, which, at this season, render it almost impracticable.

We soon perceived Cape Disappointment,<sup>58</sup> which seems to point out to travellers the course [67] they are to pursue. It was growing late, and the captain resolved to steer out into the open sea, to avoid the danger of running aground during the night. As the vessel moved slowly onward, leaving the shore in the distance, we stood upon deck, contemplating from afar the high mountains and vast forests of Oregon. Here and there we could distinguish the clouds of smoke curling upwards from the huts of our poor Indians. This aspect filled my very soul with indescribable emotions. It would be necessary to be placed in the same position, to understand fully what were then our feelings. Our hearts palpitated with joy as we gazed on those boundless regions, over which were scattered so many abandoned souls—the young, the aged—dying in the shades of infidelity, for want of missionaries; an evil which we were about to alleviate, if not for all, at least for a great number.

The 29th all the fathers celebrated the Holy Sacrifice, wishing to offer a last violence to heaven, and force, as

<sup>58</sup> For the origin of this name see our volume vi, p. 233, note 36.—ED.

it were, a benediction on our mission. The morning was dark and gloomy: so were our spirits. About 10 o'clock the sky cleared, and allowed us to approach, with caution, the vast and fearful mouth of the [68] Columbia. We soon discovered immense breakers, several miles in extent — the infallible sign of a sand bank. The shoals crossed the river, and seemed to oppose an invincible barrier to our entrance. This sight filled us with consternation. We felt that to attempt a passage would be exposing ourselves to an almost certain death. What was to be done? What become of us? How extricate ourselves from so perilous a situation?

On the 30th our captain, from the topmast, caught the glimpse of a vessel, slowly rounding the Cape, on its way out of the river. This cheering sight was in a moment snatched from our eager view by an intervening rock, under the shade of which it cast anchor, to await a favourable wind. Its appearance, however, led us to conclude that the passage of the river was yet practicable, and we hoped to be directed by its course. About 3 o'clock the captain sent the lieutenant, with three sailors, to sound the breakers, and seek a favorable opening for our entrance on the morrow, which happened to be the 31st July, feast of the great "Loyola." This auspicious coincidence re-animated our hopes, and roused our drooping courage. Full of confidence in the powerful protection of our [69] glorious founder, we prostrated ourselves, and fervently implored him not to abandon us in our extreme need. This duty accomplished, we hastened on deck, to await the return of the shallop. It was not until 11 o'clock that their little vessel came alongside the "Indefatigable." No one dared interrogate the sailors, for their dejected countenances foreboded discouraging tidings. However, the lieutenant assured the captain



that he had found no obstacle, and that he had passed the bar the preceding night, at 11 o'clock, with five fathoms (30 feet) of water. Immediately were the sails unfurled, and the "Indefatigable" slowly resumed her majestic course, under the favor of a rising breeze. The sky was serene, the sun shone with unwonted brilliancy. For a long time we had not beheld so lovely a day; nothing but the safe entrance into the river was wanting, to render this the *most beautiful* day of our voyage. As we approached, we re-doubled our prayers. All appeared recollected, and prepared for every event. Presently our wary captain gave orders to sound. A hardy sailor fastened himself to the side of the vessel, and lowered the plummet. Soon was heard the cry, "Seven fathoms." At intervals the cry was repeated: "Six fathoms," [70] "Five fathoms." It may be imagined how our hearts palpitated at each reiteration. But when we heard the thrilling cry of "*Three fathoms*," all hope vanished. At one moment it was thought the vessel would be dashed against the reefs. The lieutenant said to the captain, "We are between life and death; but we must advance." The Lord had not resolved on our destruction, but He wished to test the faith of his servants. In a few moments the tidings of four fathoms roused our sinking spirits: we breathed once more, but the danger yet impended over us; we had still to sail two miles amidst these fearful breakers. A second time is heard the chilling cry of "Three fathoms!" "We have mistaken our route," exclaimed the lieutenant. "Bah!" exclaimed the captain, "do you not see that the Indefatigable passes over everything? Keep on." Heaven was for us; otherwise, neither the skill of our captain, nor the sailors' activity, could have rescued us from inevitable death. We were amidst the southern channel, which no vessel had ever crossed.



A few moments after we learned that our escape had been miraculous.

Our vessel had, at first, taken the right course for entering the river, but, not far from its mouth, the Columbia divides into two branches, [71] forming, as it were, two channels. The northern, near Cape Disappointment, is the one we should have followed; the southern is not frequented, owing to the tremendous breakers that obstruct its entrance over which we had passed, the first, and probably the last. We also learned, that the deputy of Fort Astoria, having descried our vessel two days before, hastened, with some savages, to the extremity of the cape, and endeavored, by means of large fires, hoisted flags, and the firing of guns, to warn us of danger. We had, indeed, perceived these signals, but without suspecting they were intended for us. God, no doubt, wished to show us that he is sufficiently powerful to expose us to peril, and to withdraw us from it unharmed. Glory to His holy name! glory, also, to St. Ignatius, who so visibly protected his children on this, his festal day.

About 4½, a canoe approached us: it contained Clatsop Indians, commanded by an American resident of the coast.<sup>59</sup> The whoop of these wild men of the forest much astonished our fathers, and the sisters of Notre Dame. The only word we could distinguish was "Catché," which they vociferated countless times. Our captain made them a sign to approach, and permitted them to [72] come on board. The American immediately accosted me, and spoke of our perilous situation, saying, that he would have come to our aid, but his Indians refused to brave

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<sup>59</sup> For the Clatsop see our volume vi, p. 239, note 39. The American with them was probably either Solomon H. Smith, or Calvin Tibbitts, who both lived at Clatsop Plains, having crossed the continent with Wyeth; see Wyeth's *Oregon*, our volume xxi, p. 73, note 50.—ED.

the danger. The Indians, on their side, endeavored by signs to make us comprehend how great had been their terror, for, at every moment, they expected to see our vessel dashed into a thousand pieces. They had wept for us, convinced, that without the intervention of the "Great Spirit," we could never have escaped the dangers. Verily, these brave savages were not mistaken. All who know the history of our passage affirm the same; they cease not to congratulate us on so miraculous an escape.

The second visit we received, was from some Tchinouks, a small tribe, inhabiting the immense forests of the northern shore. The Clatsops, whose number amounts to not more than one hundred and fifty men, occupy the southern shore. The Tchinouks inhabit three villages beyond the forest. The men wrap themselves in blankets when they appear before the "whites," and are excessively vain of their collars and ear-rings. Their disposition is extremely sociable, and we found it necessary to be on the reserve, to prevent their too great familiarity. [73] They are content, provided they be not driven away, and they require no further attention paid them. They are of a peaceable temper, and, as their wants are easily supplied, they lead an inactive and indolent life. Fishing and the chase form their sole occupation. Game abounds in their forests, and their rivers are teeming with salmon. After providing for their daily wants, they spend entire hours motionless, basking in the sun; it is needless to add, they live in the most profound ignorance of religion. These are the Indians who have the custom of flattening their children's heads.

The following morning we perceived a small skiff making its way towards us. It belonged to Mr. Burney, the gentleman who, in our recent danger, had acted so

friendly a part.<sup>60</sup> He accosted us with the utmost kindness, and invited us to return with him to Fort Astoria, of which he is the Superintendant, that his wife and children might have the pleasure of seeing us. Persuaded, that after so tedious a voyage, the visit would be agreeable to all parties, I readily consented. Whilst this hospitable family were preparing dinner we made a little excursion into the neighboring forest. We were in admiration of the immense height and prodigious [74] bulk of the fir trees, many of which were two hundred feet high, and four and a half in diameter. We beheld one which measured forty-two feet in circumference.

After a ramble of two hours, Mr. Burney re-conducted us to the fort.

In a second promenade several of our company greatly admired the tombs of the savage. The deceased is placed in a sort of canoe, or hollow trunk of a tree; the body is then covered with mats or skins; and the savage entombing consists in thus suspending the corpse to the branches of trees, or exposing it on the banks of the river. In one place we saw about twelve of these sepulchres; they are ordinarily found in places of difficult access, the better to secure them from the rapine of wild beasts.<sup>61</sup> Not far from this cemetery one of our fathers, more curious than the others, wandered a little distance into the woods; he speedily hastened back, apparently in a panic, saying that he had seen the *muzzle of a bear*, which did not look very tame.

I set out for Fort Vancouver the 2d August, wishing to reach there before my companions, that I might inform

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<sup>60</sup> James Birnie (Burney), for whom see Townsend's *Narrative* in our volume xxi, p. 361, note 130.—ED.

<sup>61</sup> See descriptions of this form of entombment in our volume xxi, p. 338; also in *Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, iii, pp. 260, 326.—ED.

the Rev. Mr. Blanchet of our happy arrival. As to our fathers, the remainder [75] of their voyage may be summed up in few words. On the 3d and 4th their vessel was almost stationary, for want of a favorable wind. At a glance, their three days' voyage might be measured. Towards evening a gentle breeze sprung up, and thus permitted them to pursue their course. In a few hours they passed the rocks, extending the distance of six leagues. They were then enabled to keep the centre of the river, where the numerous windings of the stream compelled them to make continual manœuvres.

In this place the river is most magnificent: the smooth polished surface of the waters — the rapid current, almost concealed from view by the contraction of its rocky bed — the sullen roaring of the waterfalls and cascades — produce upon the mind an effect of sublimity and grandeur not to be described. One is never weary admiring the richness, beauty, and variety of these solitary regions. The shores on either side are bordered by lofty forests, and crowned with thickly-wooded forests. It is more especially in the *forest* that the grand, the picturesque, the sublime, the beautiful, form the most singular and fantastic combinations. From the loftiest giants of the forest down to the humblest [76] shrubs, *all* excite the spectator's astonishment. The parasites form a characteristic feature of these woodlands. They cling to the tree, climb it to a certain height, and then, letting their tops fall to the earth, again take root — again shoot up — push from branch to branch — from tree to tree, in every direction — until tangled, twisted, and knotted in every possible form, they festoon the whole forest with drapery in which a ground-work of the richest verdure is diversified with garlands of the most varied and many-colored flowers. In ascending the Columbia

we meet, from time to time, with bays of considerable extent, interspersed with handsome little islands, which, thrown, as it were, like groups of flowers and verdure, present a charming spectacle. Here the painter should go to study his art — here would he find the loveliest scenery, the most varied and brilliant coloring. At every step the scene becomes more ravishing; the perspective more noble and majestic. In no other part of the world is nature so great a *coquette* as here.

At length, on the 5th August, the vessel arrived at Fort Vancouver, about 7 o'clock in the evening. The governor, an excellent and truly pious man, together with his lady, and the most [77] respectable personages of the place, were assembled on the shore to receive us. As soon as the ship had cast anchor we landed, and hastened to the fort, where we were received and treated with all possible cordiality. Here we were obliged to tarry eight days, for the Rev. Mr. Blanchet, who did not arrive till the 12th, not having received my letter, informing him of our arrival. No sooner was he aware of it than he hastened to join us, bringing with him a considerable number of parishioners. He had travelled the entire night and day, and we were delighted to meet this indefatigable clergyman. Though so comfortably situated at the fort, yet we were anxious to arrive as soon as possible at the place destined us by Divine Providence. The pious religious likewise sighed after their convent home of Willamette. Monsieur Blanchet accordingly made the necessary arrangement for our departure, and we left Fort Vancouver on the 14th.

An affecting adieu awaited us. Our worthy captain stood upon the shore. The emotion was sensibly felt by each one of us. For eight months we had shared the same dangers, and so often stood together, gazing in the

very face of death: could we then restrain the parting [78] tear, which seemed to gush from the fountain of the heart, as we remembered his kindness.

Our little squadron consisted of four canoes, manned by the parishioners of Mr. Blanchet, and our own sloop. We sailed up the river, and soon entered the Willamette, whose waters flow into the Columbia.

As night approached we moored our vessels and encamped upon the shore. There, grouped around the fire, we partook of our evening meal. The night was calm and serene — all nature was hushed in profound silence — all invited us to repose; but the swarms of musquitoes with which these woods abound, prevented our slumber. The religious, to whom we had yielded the tent, suffered equally with those who had nothing but the star-spangled canopy of heaven above them. You will not, consequently, be surprised, that the night appeared somewhat long, and that the morning's dawn found us on foot. It was the festival of the glorious Assumption of the Mother of God, which, in these regions, is usually solemnized on the following Sunday. Aided by the religious, I erected a small altar. Mr. Blanchet offered the Holy Sacrifice, at which all communicated.

Finally, the 17th, about 11 o'clock, we came [79] in sight of our dear mission of Willamette. Mr. Blanchet charged himself with the transportation of our baggage.

A cart was procured to conduct the religious to their dwelling, which is about five miles from the river. In two hours we were all assembled in the chapel of Willamette, to adore and thank our Divine Saviour, by the solemn chanting of the *Te Deum*, in which all hearts and lips joined with lively emotion.

Early in the morning of Sunday, the 18th, the day on which the Assumption is celebrated here, we saw the



Canadian cavaliers arriving in crowds with their wives and children, whom they had brought from great distances, to assist at the solemn services of the church.

At 9 o'clock all were arranged in perfect order in the church; the men on one side, the women on the other. The Rev. Mr. Blanchet celebrated the August Sacrifice, assisted by twenty acolytes. The piety of his parishioners contributed much to our edification.

On arriving at the mission of St. Paul, of Willamette, we proceeded at once to the residence of the Very Rev. Mr. Blanchet, who received us with the greatest kindness, and immediately placed at our disposal everything on [80] the place. My first care was, to seek some convenient locality where, according to the plan of our Very Rev. Father General, a mother mission could be established. For this purpose I made several unsuccessful excursions into the adjacent country. The most eligible situations were already occupied. The Methodists, indeed, offered to sell me their Academy, which is a sufficiently large and handsome house, but entirely destitute of wood and arable land.<sup>62</sup> In this perplexity Mr. Blanchet relieved me, by a generous and disinterested offer. He proposed to examine the property belonging to the mission, and take such portions of it as I should judge most proper for our projected establishment. We accordingly set out on this new excursion; but we had scarcely proceeded two miles when we came

<sup>62</sup> This was the building on the site of the present city of Salem, which was erected in 1842 by Jason Lee for the Indian mission school formerly conducted in a log house twelve miles below. The mission school had suffered reverses from illness and the loss of missionary leaders, and Rev. George Gary had arrived in Oregon May 1, 1844, to close up the affairs of the entire Methodist mission. The building for the school, which had with the surrounding land cost nearly \$10,000 became the property of the Oregon Institute, which opened a school therein in the autumn of this year (1844). This subsequently became the nucleus of Willamette University, chartered in 1853.—ED.



to a point uniting every desirable advantage. Picture to yourself an immense plain extending as far as the eye can reach; on one side the snowy crests of the gigantic Hood, Jefferson, and St. Helena (the three highest peaks of Oregon), towering majestically upwards, and losing themselves in the clouds; on the east a long range of distant hills, their blue-tinged summits melting, as it were, into the deep azure of the sky; on the west the [81] limpid waters of two small lakes, on whose beautiful shores the beaver, the otter, and the musk-rat, sport in careless security, heedless of our presence. The elevation on which we were standing, gradually sloping downward, and forming a charming amphitheatre, extended to the borders of one of the lakes. I hesitated not a moment in selecting this spot for the mother mission. The sweet recollections of our first establishment on the Missouri returned to my mind; and the remembrance of the rapid progress of the Mission of St. Stanislaus, near St. Ferdinand, whose branches now extend over the greater part of Missouri, Ohio, Louisiana, reaching even the Rocky Mountains, and penetrating to the eastern boundary of America, led me to breathe a fervent prayer, that here, also, might be formed a station, whence the torch of faith would diffuse its cheering light among the benighted tribes of this immense Territory. We have also a fine view of the Willamette River, which, in this place, makes a sudden bend, continuing its course amidst dense forests, which promise an almost inexhaustible supply of materials for the construction of our mission house. In no part of this region have I met with a more luxuriant growth of pine, fir, elm, [82] oak, buttonball, and yew trees. The intervening country is beautifully diversified with shadowy groves and smiling plains, whose rich soil yields abundant harvests, sufficient for the maintenance of a

large establishment. Besides these advantages, there are a number of springs, on one side of the hill, one of which is not more than 100 feet from the house, and it will probably be of great use hereafter.<sup>63</sup> Having now made choice of the locality, we commenced without delay the erection of the buildings. The first thing to be done was to clear the ground by cutting away the under-brush and isolated trees, after which, with the aid of the inhabitants, we constructed three wooden buildings, covered by a single roof of 90 feet; these were to serve as workshops for the brother blacksmith, carpenter, etc.

Besides these, a house, 45 by 35 feet, is now under way. It is to be two stories, and will be the dwelling-house of the missionaries.

We arrived in the Oregon Territory during the prevalence of a disease (bloody flux) which was considered contagious, though the physicians attributed it to the unwholesome properties of the river-water. Numbers of savages fell victims to it, especially among the Tchinouks, [83] and the Indians of the Cascades, large parties of whom encamped along the banks of the river, on their way to Vancouver, to obtain the aid of a physician. Those who could not proceed were abandoned by their friends; and it was truly painful to see these poor creatures stretched out, and expiring on the sand. The greater part of our sailors, and three of the sisters, were attacked by the pestilence; the Rev. Father Accolti also experienced its terrible effects; for myself, I was obliged to keep my bed during 15 long days, and to observe a rigorous diet. But the captain of our vessel was the greatest sufferer. The disease attacked him so violently, that I seriously fear he will never again return to the cherished family — the

<sup>63</sup> The site was about three miles above Champoeg, not far from the residence of Etienne Lucier, one of the earliest settlers of French Prairie.— ED.

affectionate wife and children of whom he used daily to speak with so much tenderness. He was a worthy man—an experienced and skilful navigator; I esteemed him highly, although I could not forbear blaming him for the little courage he had shown in repressing the profane language of one of the passengers, who, from the time of his embarkation until we landed him at Fort Vancouver, had never ceased to offend our ears by his horrid oaths. The Almighty has denounced his curse against the blasphemer; [84] and sooner or later it will fall upon him. Poor “Indefatigable,” I tremble for thy fate.

The winter was rapidly approaching, and, notwithstanding my weak state, I could not resist my pressing desire to visit, once more, my dear Indians of the mountains, who, on their side, await my return with the greatest impatience, as I was informed by the Rev. F. Mengarini, who had come to meet me.<sup>64</sup> To-day I shall have the happiness to set out for the Rocky Mountains.

I am, &c.,

*P. J. De Smet.*

- ↓ P. S.—On the 9th September the good sisters commenced instructing the women and children, who were preparing for their first communion. As their house was not yet habitable, they were obliged to give their instructions in the open air. In three days' time they had already 19 pupils, from 16 to 60 years of age, all of whom came from a distance, bringing with them provisions for several days, and sleeping in the woods, exposed to all the inclemencies of the weather. It is easy to conceive by this how eager these poor people are for instruction. Each day the sisters devote six hours to teaching [85] them the usual prayers, and manner of making the sign of the

<sup>64</sup> For a sketch of this missionary see De Smet's *Letters* in our volume xxvii, p. 193, note 69.—ED.

cross. On one occasion, it was discovered that a woman had remained two days without food; the dogs had devoured her little provision, and, lest she should miss the instruction, she was unwilling to go home for another supply.

24th.—The convent having as yet neither doors nor sashes, owing to the scarcity of mechanics, some of these good Sisters were seen endeavoring to handle the plane, others glazing, painting the windows and doors, &c. They were the more ardently desirous for the completion of their new habitation, as already thirty Canadian pupils had been offered them; and thus would they be enabled to procure the means of giving a gratuitous support and protection to the hapless orphans of the forests. These poor children, rescued from their destitute condition, and placed under the benign care of the kind Sisters, would enjoy the blessings of a Christian education, and become, one day, co-operators in the mission. But, to effect this, and to realize the cheering hopes it holds forth, funds must be raised to provide the necessary clothing for the orphans, as the profits arising from the school will not be more than sufficient to defray [86] the expenses of their board. I here give you the brilliant prospectus of their Academy. Per quarter, 100 lbs flour, 25 lbs pork, or 36 of beef, 1 sack of potatoes, 4 lbs hogs' lard, 3 gallons peas, 3 doz. eggs, 1 gallon salt, 4 lbs candles, 1 lb tea, 4 lbs rice.

The Sisters took possession of their convent in the month of October; a few days after, their chapel was solemnly consecrated by the Rev. Mr. Blanchet; and they have since enjoyed the happiness of assisting every day at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, offered up at their simple altar by one of the missionaries, stationed at St. Francis Xavier.<sup>65</sup> They have also twice had the conso-

<sup>65</sup> The mission or residence at this point was known as St. Francis Xavier.

lation of presenting at the table of the Lord the little band of fervent neophytes, whom they had prepared with so much care, for this solemn action. This success, in so short a time, has induced us to conceive the project of founding another house of this order in the village of Cuhute." Monsieur Blanchet and Father De Vos think, that the departure of the Protestant ministers, on account of their fruitless labors, renders this an auspicious moment for the establishment of a religious house. The station of Willamette would furnish occupation sufficient for twelve Sisters, but unfortunately they are but six in number.

x [87] We learn with pleasure that it is the intention of Monseigneur Blanchet to visit Europe immediately after his consecration, in order to obtain, if possible, twelve more of these zealous and devoted religious, for the mission. God grant he may succeed; and that the want of pecuniary means may not oppose an insurmountable obstacle to the generous sacrifice, which, we are all well-assured, the pious Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame are disposed to make again in our behalf.

### No. III

#### A. M. D. G.

At the Foot of the Great Glaciere, one of the Upper Sources of the Athabasca River, May 6th, 1846.

MONSEIGNEUR,—I am late, but not forgetful of my duty and promises, for I will remember the many obligations I have contracted, and the happy hours I passed, when

★ The convent was, however, entitled St. Mary's or Notre Dame, from the convent at Namur, whence the sisters set forth.—ED.

"Chittenden and Richardson, *De Smet*, ii, p. 453, give "Oregon City" as the alternative of this native village. Consultation with Oregon historians, however, gives no support to this theory—the term "Cuhute" never having been applied to the locality of Oregon City during the residence, or within the knowl-

travelling in your paternity's company. I now come to redeem them, by troubling you with a dozen Rocky Mountain letters,<sup>67</sup> including a narrative of my last year's excursions and missions among several Indian tribes; of what I have seen and heard; and of what happened, as I was travelling along. I hope my letters may be consoling to you, and serve as a proof that the work of God is progressing among the long-benighted children of the Oregon desert, and among the lonely tribes on the northern waters of the great Mackenzie River. Four priests from Red River will soon find ample employment in the dreary regions of the Hudson Bay Territory. How lamentable it is, that the great western desert alone, extending from the States to the eastern [89] base of the Rocky Mountains, and south to the Mexican lines, should be lying waste. This would, indeed, present an extensive field to the zeal of Catholic missionaries; and, from my personal observations, and those of all the priests who have passed this desert, their efforts would be crowned with the greatest success. Indians are, in general, carelessly judged and little known in the civilized world; people will form their opinions from what they see among the Indians on the frontiers, where the "fire water," and all the degrading vices of the whites have caused the greatest havoc. The farther one penetrates into the desert the better he finds the aborigines; and, in general, I found them most willing and anxious to receive religious instruction, and to hear the good tidings of salvation.

edge of white settlers. George H. Himes of Portland, after interviewing several pioneers, writes us: "I conclude that the village referred to by De Smet was the name of a village belonging to a small sub-tribe of Indians in the vicinity of the present town of St. Paul, Marion County, which was annihilated by the disease already alluded to."—ED.

<sup>67</sup> This letter enclosed those following, numbered iv-xv, in the last of which De Smet says that he is sending a packet of letters by the Hudson's Bay brigade from Columbia, which he has just encountered.—ED.



A bishop, and two or three priests, who would make it their business to visit the different tribes of this vast land, remaining among each of the tribes a reasonable and sufficient time to instruct the Indians, would most certainly meet with the most abundant harvest; the scalping-knife might thus soon be laid aside, and where the Indian war-whoop has for centuries resounded, might be heard in its stead, [90] the canticles and praises of the true and only living God. The idea of collecting and settling these wandering nations, would, in my humble opinion, be impossible, or, at least, a very slow work. The Indians might be made good Christians, and still continue, at the same time, to lead a hunter's life, as long as buffalo and deer will supply their wants.

Nothing, but the interest I feel for these poor people, and the assurance I have that they will find a patron and friend in your paternity, make me bold enough to make an appeal to you in their favor, so that a speedy remedy may be applied to the existing and most distressing want of this large district of the United States. Thousands of whites are well cared for and are straying from the true path — the Indians have likewise souls to be saved, redeemed by the Saviour's precious blood, and thousands of these bereft children are most anxious to enjoy the salutary blessings with which their white brethren are favored.

I remain, with the greatest esteem and respect, recommending myself at the same time to your holy sacrifices and prayers.

Your very humble and obedient servant in Christ,

*P. J. De Smet, S.J.*



## No. IV

## A. M. D. G.

St. Francis Xavier, Willamette, June 20th, 1845.

RIGHT REV. BISHOP,<sup>68</sup>

SIR,—In the beginning of February, I set out to visit our different settlements and stations, and to form new ones among the neighboring tribes of our reductions. The entire surface of this region was then covered with snow, five feet deep; and I was compelled to go from the Bay of Pends-d'oreilles to the Horse Plain, in a bark canoe, a distance of 250 miles.<sup>69</sup>

I was among my dear *Flatheads* and *Pends-d'oreilles*<sup>70</sup> (ear-rings) of the mountains, during the Paschal time, and had the great consolation of finding them replete with zeal and fervor in fulfilling the duties of true children of prayer. The solemn feast of Easter, all the *Flatheads* at St. Mary's devoutly approached the most blessed sacrament during my mass; and about three hundred *Pends-d'oreilles*, (the greater number adults), belonging to the

<sup>68</sup> Addressed to Bishop (later Archbishop) John Hughes of New York. From the time of the descriptive letter number ii, written from Willamette valley October 9, 1844, to the beginning of this letter in February, 1845, Father de Smet had made a journey to his previously-founded missions in the interior. Leaving Vancouver, he ascended the river to Fort Walla Walla, thence crossed Spokane plains and the mountains to the camp of the Pend d'Oreille on Clark's Fork, where he met Father Adrian Hoeken. There a deputation from the Cœur d'Alènes waited on the father to persuade him to visit their mission of Sacred Heart, where he was received November 11 by Father Nicolas Point. Setting forth thence, eight days later he found the road to the Flatheads impracticable because of floods and ice, so that he was obliged to pass the winter (1844-45) with the Pend d'Oreille in their winter quarters on Clark's Fork.—ED.

<sup>69</sup> For the location of Horse Plain see De Smet's *Letters* in our volume xxvii, p. 337, note 172. The location of the Bay of the Pend d'Oreille (Kalispels) is given *post*, note 73.—ED.

<sup>70</sup> For these tribes and the former visit of De Smet, see his *Letters* in our volume xxvii, especially p. 141, note 8.—ED.

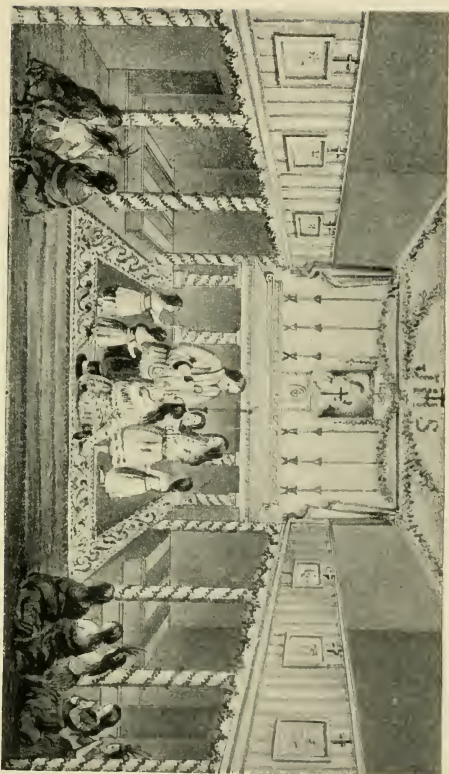
station of St. Francis [92] Borgia,<sup>71</sup> presented themselves at the baptismal font. Five chiefs were among the number; the most distinguished are *Stiئتiedloodsho*, or chieftain of the Tribe Valiant; *Selpisto*, the head chieftain, and *Chalax*, that is to say the *White Robe*, surnamed the Juggler or great medicine man.<sup>72</sup> The word *medicine man*, in their language, is synonymous with juggler.

How consoling it is to pour the regenerating waters of baptism on the furrowed and scarified brows of these desert warriors,—to behold these children of the plains and forests emerging from that profound ignorance and superstition in which they have been for so many ages deeply and darkly enveloped; to see them embrace the faith and all its sacred practices, with an eagerness, an attention, a zeal, worthy the pristine Christians.

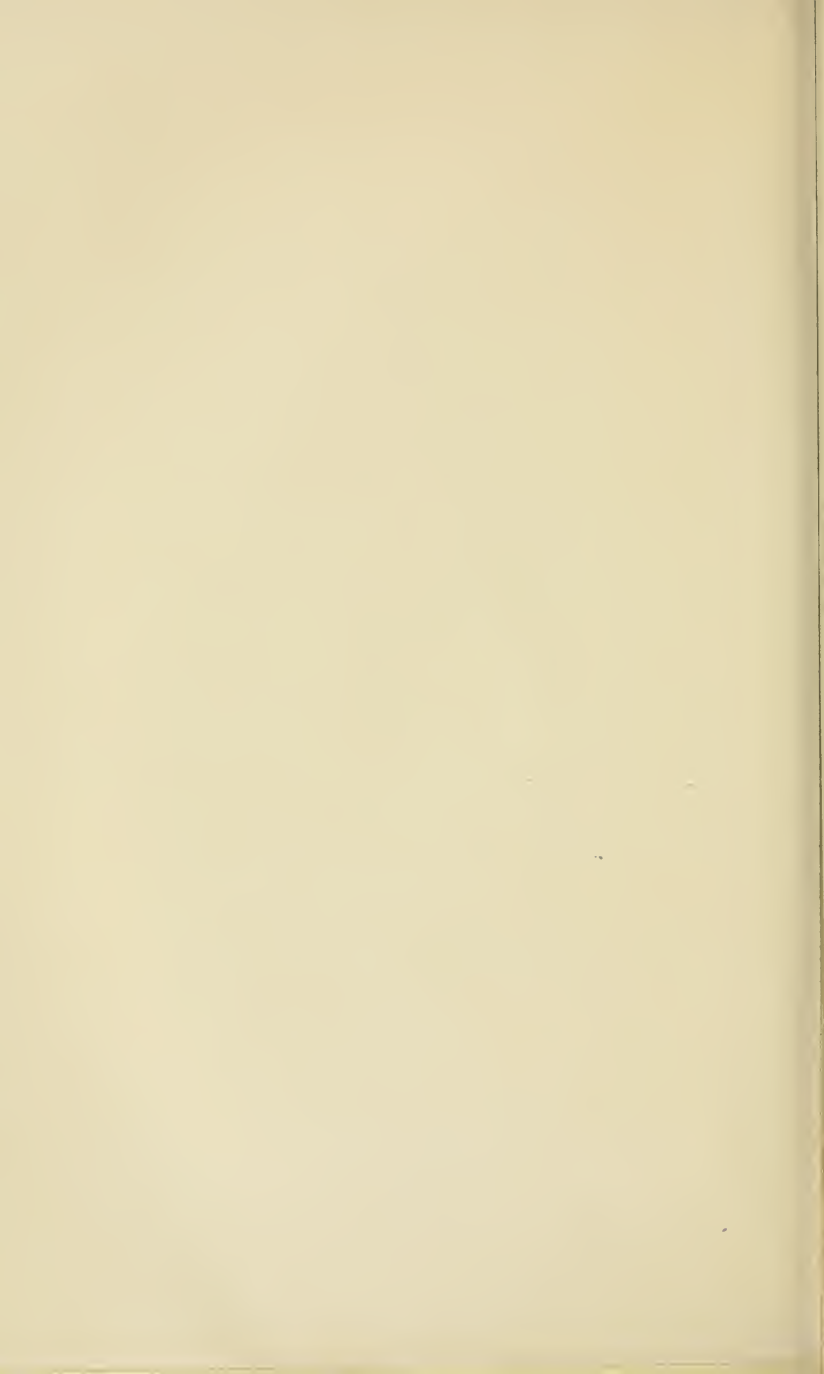
Were I to give you the history of these chiefs, I should greatly exceed the limits I have proposed. Suffice it to say, that these heroes of the Rocky Mountains have been for years the terror of their enemies. Chalax had acquired great celebrity *as a juggler*, and in predicting future events; if we may credit the *Kalispels* and the whites who have travelled in company with him, these prophecies have been verified. [93] He indicated the day, the place, and the number of *Blackfeet* who would attack their camp. Having interrogated him relative to this affair, he, with great simplicity and candor, replied: "I am called the

<sup>71</sup> This stream, now known as St. Regis Borgia, is a tributary of the Missoula from the west. Rising in Bitterroot Mountains it flows slightly south of east through a fertile valley, which forms the present route of the Northern Pacific Railway. See De Smet's *Letters*, in our volume xxvii, p. 362, note 183.—ED.

<sup>72</sup> Stiئتiedloodsho was surnamed "Bravest of the Brave;" for an account of his fight with the Crows, see *post*, letter xxiii. His baptismal name was Moses, and he was an adopted brother of Father de Smet, who relates several anecdotes of his piety; see Chittenden and Richardson, *De Smet*, iv, pp. 1225, 1226. He was known to be living in 1857. Possibly Selpisto was the great chief baptized in 1840 as Peter. For Chalax see our volume xxvii, p. 284, note 148.—ED.



Interior of St. Mary's Church, Flat-head Mission: Communion at Easter  
(See Letter 4th)



Great Doctor, yet, never have I given myself up to the practices of juggling, nor condescended to exercise its deceptions. I derive all my strength from prayer; when in a hostile country, I address myself to the Master of life, and offer Him my heart and soul, entreating him to protect us against our enemies. A voice had already warned me of coming danger; I then recommend prudence and vigilance throughout the camp; for the monitory voice has never deceived me. I have now a favor to request: the mysterious voice calls me by the name of *Chalax*, and, if you will permit, I desire to bear that name until my death." I willingly consented, and then explained to him the ceremony of the *White Garment* he was about to receive, in the holy sacrament of baptism. To the name of *Chalax* I affixed that of the Prince of the Apostles. This is the same chief, who on my first visit to the mountains, aided by only sixty men, sustained during five days, an obstinate struggle against 200 lodges of *Blackfeet*, whom he put to flight, [94] leaving on the ground eighty men, whilst among the *Flatheads* only one man was wounded. He died three months after.

With regret I parted from these good Indians, and my beloved brothers in Jesus Christ, the Rev. Fathers Mengarini, Zerbinati, and four coadjutor brothers; who are laboring with indefatigable zeal in this portion of our Lord's vineyard.

As the snow was fast disappearing, the Kalispels of the bay were awaiting my arrival. I re-entered my fragile canoe, guided by two Indians, and made all possible haste to descend Clarke's River. You may judge of its impetuosity when I inform you, that we were sixteen days ascending the river, and but four in descending the same. On returning to the bay, accompanied by Rev. Father Hocken and several chiefs, my first care was to examine the lands

belonging to this portion of the Tribe of Kalispels, and select a fit site for erecting the new establishment of St. Ignatius.<sup>73</sup> We found a vast and beautiful prairie, three miles in extent, surrounded by cedar and pine, in the neighborhood of the cavern of New Manrese,<sup>74</sup> and its quarries, and a fall of water more than two hundred feet, presenting every advantage [95] for the erection of mills. I felled the first tree, and after having taken all necessary measures to expedite the work, I departed for Walla Walla, where I embarked in a small boat and descended the Columbia, as far as Fort Vancouver. The melting of the snow had occasioned a considerable freshet, and our descent was very rapid. The place was indicated to me where a few months previously, four travellers from the United States had miserably perished, victims of their own temerity and presumption. When advised to provide themselves with a guide, they answered they had no need of any; and when warned that the river was dangerous and deceptive, the pilot, with a scoffing boast, replied, "I am capable of guiding my barge, were it even across the infernal gulf." The monitor wished them a fortunate voyage, but at the same time trembled for their fate, saying: "This pilot is not a native Indian, he is not an Iroquois, nor even a Canadian." The turbulent stream

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<sup>73</sup> The site of the first mission of St. Ignatius, called by De Smet the Bay of the Kalispels, was on the east bank of Clark's Fork, in latitude about 48° 20' north, longitude 117° 10' west, in the present Stevens County, Washington, not far from the town of Usk. The mission was maintained at this point until 1854, when, the spot proving unsuitable from frequent overflows, a site was chosen in western Montana on the present Flathead Reservation, whence the mission was transferred and where it has since been maintained. See L. B. Palladino, *Indian and White in the Northwest*, pp. 68-79.—ED.

<sup>74</sup> Manresa is a town in the northeastern part of Spain, where Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuit order, spent a year dwelling in a cave, and subjecting himself to severe austerities. It is now a place of pilgrimage for the pious followers of the saint.—ED.

soon engulfed its presumptuous and daring victims. They steered out into the midst of the river, and in an instant the canoe was borne along with the rapidity of lightning, leaving in its train a thick foam, caused by the violent plying of oars. Approaching the rapids, [96] they fearlessly hurried onward — alas, their fate was soon to be decided. Drawn by the eddy into the centre of a whirlpool, vainly they struggled to extricate themselves — they beheld the dread abyss yawning to receive its prey! Yet, an instant, the ill-fated barge twirled upon the surface, and then sank, amidst the despairing shrieks of the helpless crew, which the roaring waves rendered the more appalling, whilst the dismal sounds re-echoing from shore to shore, proclaimed the new disaster of the “Columbia.” Soon the waters resumed their wonted course, and left no trace of the sad catastrophe. This fatal spot might appropriately be designated, Presumptive’s Rapids; doubtless, it will be a lesson to future boasters, not to venture, without pilot or guide, upon this formidable tributary of the western ocean.

After a prosperous voyage of five days, I debarked at Vancouver, where I had the happiness of meeting Father Nobili, who, during eight months, had applied himself to study the Indian language, while he exercised his sacred ministry among the Catholics of the fort and the Indians of the neighborhood. More than a tenth of the latter had been swept off by a mortal disease; happily, they all had the consolation [97] of receiving baptism before they expired.

Father Nobili accompanied me in a Tchinouk canoe, up the beautiful River of Multnomah or Willamette, a distance of about sixty miles, as far as the village of Champois,<sup>75</sup> three miles from our residence of St. Francis

<sup>75</sup> Champoeg — an Indian name, signifying a kind of edible root — was an



Xavier. On our arrival all the fathers came to meet us, and great was our delight in being again reunited after a long winter season. The Italian fathers had applied themselves chiefly to the study of languages. Father Ravalli, being skilled in medicine, rendered considerable services to the inhabitants of St. Paul's Mission; for every dwelling contained several sick. Father Vercruysse, at the request of Right Rev. Bishop Blanchet, opened a mission among the Canadians who were distant from St. Paul's, and he succeeded in causing them to contribute to the erection of a new church, in a central location. Father De Vos is the only one of our fathers of Willamette who speaks English. He devotes his whole attention to the Americans, whose number already exceeds 4,000. There are several Catholic families, and our dissenting brethren seem well disposed; many among them are eager to be instructed in the Catholic faith.

[98] Nowhere does religion make greater progress, or present brighter prospects for the future, than in Oregon Territory. The Very Rev. Mr. Demers, Vicar General and Administrator of the diocese in the absence of the bishop, is preparing to build a brick cathedral. There is now being built, under his superintendence, a fine church at the Falls of Willamette, where, three years ago, was commenced the first town of Oregon.<sup>70</sup> This rising village numbers more than 100 houses. Several lots have

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Indian camping and council ground, lying on the borders of Kalapuya territory. Among the earliest settlements in the Willamette valley were those made near this place.—ED.

<sup>70</sup> Oregon City was laid out in lots (1843) by Dr. John McLoughlin, who had taken up the site as early as 1829 and by 1837 had made improvements there. The Methodist mission had built a store and a mill on the same site and later there was a prolonged dispute over the title. Meanwhile Oregon City (or Willamette Falls) grew, and was made the seat of the provisional government (1845-49). McLoughlin gave the site for the building of the church here mentioned, which was dedicated February 8, 1846.—ED.

been selected for a convent and two schools. A Catholic church has been erected at Vancouver.

The Convent of the Sisters of Notre Dame is fast progressing, and it will be the finest building of Willamette. The church is eighty feet long, and proportionably wide; it is under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin. The religious have already fifty boarders. The Bishop's College, under the management of the Very Rev. Mr. Bolduc, is very prosperous. The number of pupils has augmented; forty young men, chiefly *Metis*, are receiving a Christian education. Some years ago, a church was erected at Cowlitz, and the inhabitants are now preparing to construct a convent under the direction of Rev. Mr. Langlois.

[99] Our residence of St. Francis Xavier is completed; it will hereafter serve for a novitiate and seminary, to prepare young men for the missions.

Measures, which I trust will be realized, have been taken by our fathers for visiting, during this year, the numerous tribes inhabiting the Pacific coast north and south of the Columbia; where, already, the visits of the bishop and his grand vicar have been so productive of favorable results. The 17th Feb., 1842, Bishop Blanchet thus wrote to the Bishop of Quebec: "God has deigned to bless our labors, and to fructify the divine word. The adorable name of Jesus has been announced to new nations of the north. Mr. Demers bent his steps to Fort Langley on Frazer's River, in which place he administered baptism to upwards of 700 children. Many of them already enjoy the precious fruits of regenerating grace.

In my preceding letters, I gave you the details of our missions among the mountains of the higher Oregon; of the conversion of two tribes, the *Flatheads* and the *Cœurs-d'Alène* or *Pointed Hearts*; of the first communion of the latter, and conversion of several *Kalispels* of the Bay,

on the solemn festival of Christmas. From [100] 1839, when the mission was established, to July, 1845, the reverend Canadian missionaries baptized 3,000 persons. The number of Catholics residing at the different stations of the Hon. Hudson Bay Co. in Oregon, together with the colonists of the same nation, amounts to several hundreds. By adding to these 2857 baptized since 1841 in the different mountain missions, it gives us a total of more than 6,000 Catholics in Oregon. The diminutive grain of mustard is fast extending far and wide its branches, over this once sterile and neglected region. In the month of June, Father Nobili, accompanied by a brother novice, left Willamette to visit the tribes of New Caledonia. The Very Rev. Mr. Demers saw the following named tribes: *Kameloups*, the *Atnans* or *Showwapemot*, the *Porteurs* or *Ltawten*, which names vary according to the different places where the tents are pitched.<sup>77</sup> They affix the word ten which signifies people, i. e., *Stelaoten*, *Nashkoten*, *Tchilkoten*, *Nazeteoten*.<sup>78</sup> Rev. Mr. Demers had the consolation of baptizing 436 children among these tribes.

Such has since been the fervor and zeal of these poor Indians; who, though deprived of a priest, have built three

<sup>77</sup> The Kamloop and Atnah are Shushwap (Shoowhapamoo) clans of the great Salishan stock of Indians, inhabiting the region between the Rocky Mountains and Fraser River, north of the British American boundary line. The Kamloop lived in the Thompson River district, near a fort of that name (see Ross's *Oregon Settlers* in our volume vii, p. 199, note 64). For the term "Atnah" see our volume vii, p. 159, note 52.

The Porteurs (Carriers) are described in De Smet's *Letters* in our volume xxvii, p. 307, note 160. Consult G. M. Dawson "The Shuswap People," in Royal Society of Canada *Transactions*, ix, part ii, pp. 3-44; A. G. Morice, "The Western Dénés" in Canadian Institute *Proceedings*, 3d series, vol. 7, pp. 109-120; and Franz Boas, in *Report of British Association for the Advancement of Science*, 1890, pp. 642-647.—ED.

<sup>78</sup> The Stelatin dwelt on the western end of Fraser Lake; the Nashkutin (Nashkoten) on and about Blackwater River; the Chilcotin (Tchilkoten) on a river of that name [see note 102 (Farnham), *ante*, p. 81,] and the Nakasletin (Nazeteoten) on Stuart Lake.—ED.

churches, hoping that a [101] nepapayattok, or father would settle among them.

Many Catholics reside in the different forts of this country. The honorable gentlemen of the Hudson Bay Co., although Protestants, were strongly interested in favor of these savages, and did all in their power to facilitate the introduction of a clergyman into this portion of their jurisdiction.

I have the honor to be, with the most profound respect and esteem, Monseigneur, your most humble and obedient servant in Jesus Christ.

*P. J. De Smet, S. J.*

No. V

A. M. D. G.

Kalispel Bay, Aug. 7th, 1845.

MONSEIGNEUR,—A few days after the departure of Father Nobili, who obtained a place in a barge belonging to the Hon. Hudson Bay Co., I started from St. Francis Xavier's with eleven horses laden with ploughs, spades, pickaxes, scythes, and carpenters' implements. My companions were the good Brother McGill,<sup>79</sup> and two metis or mongrels. We encountered many obstacles and difficulties among the mountains, owing to the cascades formed by the water, which, at this season, descends on every side in torrents, and with irresistible fury upon the rocks, over which we were compelled to cross. In the narrow valleys between these mountains, the rhododendron displays all its strength and beauty; it rises to the height of fifteen or twenty feet. Entire groves are formed by thousands of these shrubs,

<sup>79</sup> Brother J. B. McGean (McGill) was an Irishman, who went to the mission field with Fathers Peter De Vos and Adrian Hoeken in 1843. In 1854 he was at St. Ignatius mission where he was farm superintendent.—ED.

whose clustering branches entwine themselves in beautiful green [103] arches, adorned with innumerable bouquets of splendid flowers, varying their hues from the pure white, to the deepened tint of the crimsoned rose.

Our path was strewn with the whitened bones of horses and oxen, melancholy testimonies of the miseries endured by other travellers through these regions. We passed the foot of Mt. Hood, the most elevated of this stupendous chain. It is covered with snow, and rises 16,000 feet above the level of the sea.<sup>80</sup> Capt. Wyeth, on beholding this ridge from the summit of the Blue Mountains, thus speaks of it in his journal:—"The traveller on advancing westerly, even at the distance of 160 miles, beholds the peaks of the Cascade Mountains. Several of them rise 16,000 feet above the level of the sea. Every other natural wonder seems to dwindle, as it were, into insignificance when compared to this."<sup>81</sup> From one single spot I contemplated seven of these majestic summits extending from north to south, whose dazzling white and conic form resemble a sugar loaf.

We were twenty days going from Willamette to Walla Walla, across desert and undulating lands, abounding in absinthium or wormwood, cactus, tufted grass, and several species of such [104] plants and herbs as are chiefly found in a sterile and sandy soil.

Game is scarce in these latitudes; however, we found large partridges and pheasants, aquatic fowls, small birds of various kinds, hares and rabbits. Salamanders swarm

<sup>80</sup> Father de Smet and his Indians followed the aboriginal trail across the Cascades, which afterwards became the foundation of the Barlow Road. See "History of the Barlow Road," in *Oregon Historical Society Quarterly*, iii, pp. 71-81. For Mount Hood see our volume vi, p. 248, note 54.—ED.

<sup>81</sup> For Captain Nathaniel Wyeth and his expeditions to Oregon, see our volume xxi, preface, and p. 23, note 3. This quotation, which is not verbatim, is taken from Wyeth's *Memoir*, published in *Reports of Committees*, 25 Cong., 3 sess., no. 101, p. 11.—ED.

in sandy places, and armadilloes are not rare in the vicinity of the great Dalles. Fort Walla Walla is situated in latitude  $46^{\circ} 2'$ , and longitude  $119^{\circ} 30'$ . The sandy neighborhood of this settlement likens it to a little Arabia. The River Walla Walla pours its waters a mile distant from the fort. The lowlands, when watered, are tolerably fertile, and produce maize, wheat, potatoes, and pulse of every kind. Cows and hogs are easily raised, and horses abound in this part of the country.

Having already spoken to you of the desert Nez-Percé and Spokane, I have nothing further to add relative to this dreary region. On advancing easterly towards the Blue Mountains, we find beautiful and fertile plains, interspersed with limpid and wholesome streams. The valleys are picturesque, covered with luxuriant prairies, and forests of pine and fir. The *Nez-Percé Kayuses* inhabit these delightful pastures.<sup>82</sup> They are the most wealthy tribes in Oregon; [105] even some private families possess 1500 horses. The savages successfully cultivate potatoes, pease, corn, and several kinds of vegetables and fruits. No situation affords finer grazing for cattle; even in winter they find an abundance, nor do they need shelter from the inclemency of the weather. Snow is never seen, and the rains are neither destructive nor superabundant.

About the middle of July, I arrived safely with all my effects, at the Bay of Kalispels. In my absence the number of neophytes had considerably increased. On the feast of the Ascension, Father Hocken had the happiness of baptizing more than one hundred adults. Since my departure in the spring, our little colony has built

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<sup>82</sup> For the Nez Percé Indians see our volume vi, p. 340, note 145. While closely related the Cayuse are thought by modern ethnologists to be a separate language stock, although they also spoke the Nez Percé tongue. See our volume vii, p. 137, note 37.—ED.



four houses, prepared materials for constructing a small church, and enclosed a field of 300 acres. More than four hundred *Kalispels*, computing adults and children have been baptized. They are all animated with fervor and zeal; they make use of the hatchet and plough, being resolved to abandon an itinerant life for a permanent abode. The beautiful falls of the Columbia, called the Chaudières,<sup>83</sup> in the vicinity of Fort Colville, are distant two days' journey from our new residence of St. Ignatius.

From eight to nine hundred savages were [106] there assembled for the salmon fishery. I repaired thither in time to spend with them the nine days preceding the feast of our holy founder. Within the last four years, considerable numbers of these Indians were visited by the "black-gowns," who administered the sacrament of baptism. I was received by my dear Indians with filial joy and tenderness. I caused my little chapel of boughs to be placed on an eminence in the midst of the Indians' huts, where it might not inaptly be compared to the pelican of the wilderness surrounded by her young, seeking with avidity the divine word, and sheltering themselves under the protection of their fostering mother. I gave three instructions daily; the Indians assisted at them with great assiduity and attention.

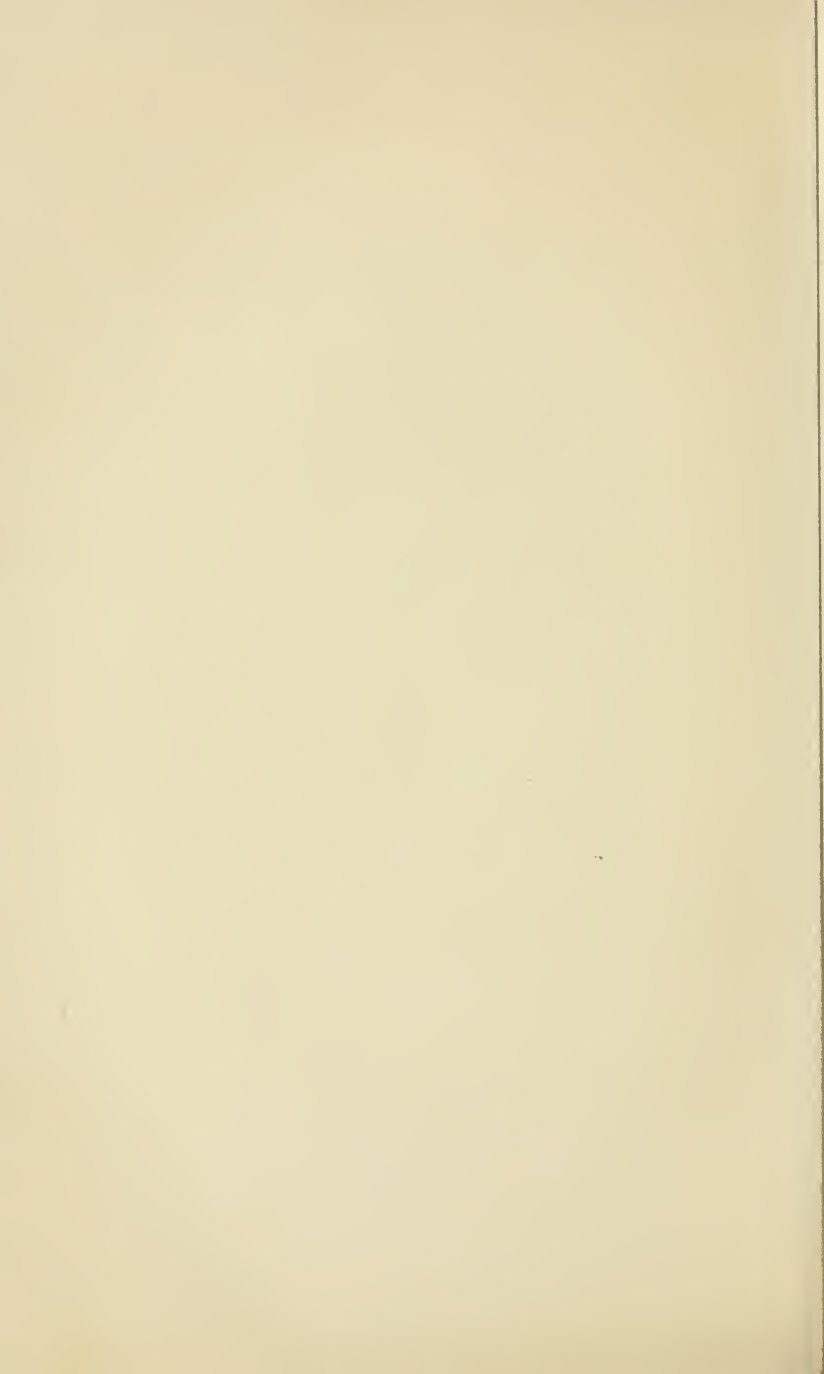
Last year, the feast of St. Ignatius proved for me a day of danger, trial, and uneasiness. I love to recall it to my mind, for it terminated joyfully, and so gloriously, that I know my companions can never forget it, and they will return lasting thanks to the Almighty, for the display of His mercy. Without a chart or any knowledge of the mouth of the Columbia, we traversed, as if borne on angels' wings, this formidable river. This year, I passed the feast [107] of St. Ignatius amidst many occupations, but

<sup>83</sup> Now known as Kettle Falls; see our volume vi, p. 346, note 153.—ED.





Mission of St. Ignatius at Kalispel Bay, among the Ponds d'Oreilles  
(See letter 5th)



they were of such a nature as to console the missionary's heart, and repay him a hundred-fold, for the trifling privations, pains, and fatigues he endures.

More than one hundred children were presented for baptism, and eleven old men borne to me on skins, seemed only awaiting regenerating waters, to depart home and repose in the bosom of their divine Saviour. The eldest among them, apparently about one hundred, and blind, addressed me in the following pathetic words:— My life has been long on earth, and my tears have not ceased to flow; even now I daily weep, for I have beheld all my children and early associates disappear. I find myself isolated among my own nation, as if I were in a strange land, thoughts of the past alone occupy me, and they are of a mournful and bitter nature. Sometimes I find consolation in remembering that I have avoided the company of the wicked. Never have I shared in their thefts, battles or murders. This blessed day, joy has penetrated the inmost recesses of my soul; the Great Spirit has taken pity on me, I have received baptism, I return him thanks for this favor, and offer him my heart and life.

[108] A solemn mass was celebrated, during which the Indians chanted canticles in praise of God. The ceremonies of baptism followed, and all terminated in the most perfect order, to the great delight and gratification of the savages. It was indeed a most imposing spectacle, all around contributed to heighten the effect. The noble, and gigantic rock, the distant roar of the cataracts breaking in on the religious silence of that solitude, situated on an eminence overlooking the powerful Oregon River, and on the spot where the impetuous waters freeing themselves from their limits, rush in fury, and dash over a pile of rocks, casting upwards a thousand jets d'eau, whose transparent columns reflect, in varied colors, the rays of the dazzling sun.

There were besides the *Shuyelphi* or *Chaudière* Indians, the *Sinpoils*, the *Zingomenes* and several *Kalispels*, accompanied me in the capacity of singers and catechists.<sup>84</sup>

I gave the name of St. Paul to the *Shuyelphi* nation, and placed under the care of St. Peter the tribe inhabiting the shores of the great Columbia lakes, whither Father Hocken is about to repair, to continue instructing and baptizing their adults. My presence among the Indians did not interrupt their fine and abundant [109] fishery. An enormous basket was fastened to a projecting rock, and the finest fish of the Columbia, as if by fascination, cast themselves by dozens into the snare. Seven or eight times during the day, these baskets were examined, and each time were found to contain about 250 salmon. The Indians, meanwhile, were seen on every projecting rock, piercing the fish with the greatest dexterity.

They who know not this territory may accuse me of exaggeration, when I affirm, that it would be as easy to count the pebbles so profusely scattered on the shores, as to sum up the number of different kinds of fish, which this western river furnishes for man's support; as the buffalo of the north, and deer from north to east of the mountains, furnish daily food for the inhabitants of those regions, so do these fish supply the wants of the western tribes. One may form some idea of the quantity of salmon and other fish, by remarking, that at the time they ascend the rivers, all the tribes inhabiting the shores, choose a favorable location, and not only do they find abundant nutriment during the season, but, if diligent, they dry, and also pulverize and mix with oil a sufficient

<sup>84</sup> For the first two tribes see De Smet's *Letters* in our volume xxvii, p. 319, notes 161, 162. The *Zingomenes* are the Spokane (see Father de Smet's letter in Chittenden and Richardson, *De Smet*, iii, p. 801), for whom see our volume vi, p. 341, note 146. *Kalispel* is an alternative for the *Pend d'Oreille*, noted in our volume xxvii, p. 141, note 8 (De Smet).—ED.

quantity for the rest of the year. Incalculable shoals of [110] salmon ascend to the river's source, and there die in shallow water. Great quantities of trout and carp follow them, and regale themselves on the spawn deposited by the salmon in holes and still water. The following spring the young salmon descend towards the sea, and I have been told, (I cannot vouch for the authenticity,) that they never return until the fourth year. Six different species are found in the Columbia River.<sup>85</sup>

I left Chaudiere or Kettle Falls, August 4th, accompanied by several of the nation of the *Crees* to examine the lands they have selected for the site of a village. The ground is rich and well suited for all agricultural purposes. Several buildings were commenced; I gave the name of St. Francis Regis to this new station, where a great number of the mixed race and beaver hunters have resolved to settle, with their families.<sup>86</sup> The 6th I traversed the high mountains of the *Kalispels*, and towards evening reached the establishment of St. Ignatius. The Rev. Fathers Hocken and Ravalli, with two lay brothers, superintend this interesting little settlement. These fathers likewise visit the different neighboring tribes, such as the *Zingomenes*, *Sinpoils*, *Okinaganes*, the stations of St. Francis [111] Regis, of St. Peter, and that of St. Paul, the *Flat-*

<sup>85</sup> The salmon of the Pacific coast rivers comprises five species of one genus, *Oncorhynchus*: *O. chavicha*, the quinnat or King salmon; *O. nerke*, the blue-backed salmon; *O. kisutch*, the silver salmon; *O. keta*, the dog salmon; and *O. gorbusha*, the hump-backed salmon. The sixth variety noted may be the *Salmo gairdneri*, or steelhead salmon trout.—ED.

<sup>86</sup> The residence or mission of St. Francis Regis is in the Colville valley, about seven and a half miles from the present town of Colville. On his next visit De Smet found settled in the vicinity about seventy Canadian métis, or half breeds. The station does not appear to have been continuous, but to have been re-established after the Indian wars (1847-56). Later it became a flourishing mission, with schools for boys and girls, and was frequently visited by Spokane and Colville Indians from the neighboring reservations. For the Cree see J. Long's *Voyages* in our volume ii, p. 168, note 75.—ED.

bows, and the *Koetenays*.<sup>87</sup> I purpose visiting these two tribes, who have never yet had the consolation of beholding a "black gown" among them. All these tribes comprehend, on an average, about five hundred souls.

I am, with profound respect and esteem,

Your lordship's most obedient servant,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

## No. VI

A. M. D. G.

Station of the Assumption, Arcs-a-plats,

August 17th, 1845.

MONSEIGNEUR,—The 9th of August I continued my route towards the country of the *Arcs-a-plats*. The roads were still inundated by the great freshet. I preferred ascending the Clark or Flathead River, in my bark canoe, and sent my horses across the forests bordering the river, to await me at the great lake of the *Kalispels*.<sup>88</sup> I had here a very agreeable and unexpected interview; as we approached the forests, several horsemen issued forth in tattered garments. The foremost gentleman saluted me by name, with all the familiarity of an old acquaintance. I returned the gracious salutation, desiring to know whom I had the honor of addressing. A small river separated us, and, with a smile, he said, "Wait until I reach the

<sup>87</sup> The Flatbows (*Arcs à plats*), in the use made of the term by De Smet, signify that branch of the Kutenai stock that is now known as the Lower Kutenai; by "Kootenay" the author designates the Upper branch of the tribal stock. They differ slightly in customs and dialects, as well as in habitat, the Lower Kutenai being partly in the United States; the Upper almost wholly in British Columbia. For a scientific study of this stock see Dr. A. F. Chamberlain in *Report of British Association for the Advancement of Science*, 1892, pp. 549-614; see also De Smet's *Letters* in our volume xxvii, p. 357, note 180.—ED.

<sup>88</sup> Lake Pend d'Oreille, in northern Idaho; for which see De Smet's *Letters* in our volume xxvii, p. 339, note 175.—ED.

opposite shore, and then you will recognise me." He is not a [113] beaver hunter, said I to myself; yet under this tattered garb and slouched hat, I could not easily descry one of the principal members of the Hon. Hudson Bay Co., the worthy and respectable Mr. Ogden. I had the honor and good fortune of making a voyage with him, and in his own barge, from Colville to Fort Vancouver, in 1842; and no one could desire more agreeable society.<sup>89</sup> It would be necessary for you to traverse the desert, to feel yourself insulated, remote from brethren, friends, to conceive the consolation and joy of such an encounter.

Mr. Ogden left England in the month of April last, accompanied by two distinguished officers. It was a source of great pleasure to receive recent news from Europe. The Oregon question appeared to me somewhat alarming. It was neither curiosity nor pleasure that induced these two officers to cross so many desolate regions, and hasten their course towards the mouth of the Columbia. They were invested with orders from their government to take possession of "Cape Disappointment," to hoist the English standard, and erect a fortress for the purpose of securing the entrance of the river, in case of war.<sup>90</sup> In the Oregon

<sup>89</sup> For a brief biographical sketch of Peter Skeen Ogden see Townsend's *Narrative* in our volume xxi, p. 314, note 99. For an account of De Smet's journey with Ogden in 1842, see the former's *Letters* in our volume xxvii, pp. 373-377.—ED.

<sup>90</sup> These officers were Captain Henry J. Warre, nephew and aide-de-camp of Sir R. Downer Jackson, commandant of British forces in North America, and Lieutenant M. Vavasour of the Royal Engineers. They had a commission from the government, perhaps not as extensive as is reported by De Smet, but doubtless ample in case of war. They were also secretly commissioned by the Hudson's Bay Company to report on Dr. McLoughlin's attitude in regard to the American settlers, and their adverse account was answered by him in detail, after his resignation (1846). The two officers left Montreal May 5, 1845, reporting at Fort Garry, whence they took the overland route followed by Sir George Simpson in 1841, arriving at Fort Colville August 12, three days after the meeting with De Smet in the Idaho forests. Their appearance at Fort Vancouver nearly coincided with that of the naval officers Park and Peel from the Pacific squadron. Warre



question, "John Bull," without much talk, attains his [114] end, and secures the most important part of the country; whereas "Uncle Sam," discharges a volley of words, inveighs and storms! Many years have been passed in debates and useless contention, without one single practical *effort* to secure his real or pretended rights. The poor Indians of Oregon, who alone have a right to the country, are not consulted. Their future destiny will be, undoubtedly, like that of so many other unfortunate tribes, who, after having lived peaceably by hunting and fishing, during several generations, will finally disappear, victims of vice and malady, under the rapacious influence of modern civilization.

The route from the great *Kalispel* lake to the *Arcs-à-plats*, or Flatbow country, is across dense forests, and much obstructed by fallen trees, morasses, frightful sloughs, from which the poor horses with much difficulty extricate themselves; but, having finally surmounted all these obstacles, we contemplate from an eminence a smiling and accessible valley, whose mellow and abundant

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and Vavasour examined the country thoroughly, and made estimates of the Indian tribes. See Robert M. Martin, *Hudson's Bay Territories* (London, 1849), p. 80. They visited Vancouver Island and Puget Sound, the settlements on the Willamette and the mouth of the Columbia, making drawings and sketches of several places visited. They remained at Fort Vancouver during the winter of 1845-46 assisting at the festivities inaugurated by the officers of the "Modeste" (see Palmer's *Journal* in our volume xxx, note 189), and left for England via the spring brigade. They mention meeting Father de Smet seven days from Boat Encampment on the return journey. Arriving in Liverpool August 12, 1846, Captain Warre prepared for the press *Sketches in North America and the Oregon Territory* (London, 1849), a copy of which is in the Portland public library. Captain Warre had been in Canada since 1839; on his return to England he received the thanks of the colonial secretary, Earl Grey, for his arduous services during his journey to the West on "special duty." Later he commanded the 57th regiment in the Crimean War and in New Zealand, 1861-66, becoming lieutenant general in 1877, and dying in 1898. He is the author of *Sketches in the Crimea* (London, 1856); he also wrote *Historical Records of the 57 regiment of foot* (London, 1878).—ED.

verdure is nourished by two lovely lakes, where the graceful river of the *Arcs-a-plats* or *McGilvray*, winds in such fantastic beauty, that it serves to make the weary traveller not only forget his past dangers, but [115] amply compensates him for the fatigues of a long and tiresome journey.<sup>91</sup>

This section of the valley of *Arcs-a-plats* greatly resembles the two valleys of the *Pointed Hearts*; same fertility of soil, lakes, pastures, willow and pine groves; elevated mountains covered to the very summit with dense forests of trees, low lands, in which the towering cedar displays all its majesty and splendid foliage; and, as Racine says:—

“Elevent aux cieux  
Leurs fronts audacieux!”

The river is, in this place, deep and tranquil; moving along with a tardy pace until aroused from its inertness by the universal thaw; it then descends with such astounding impetuosity that it destroys the banks, and in its furious course, uproots and bears along trees, fragments of rocks, &c., which vainly oppose its passage. In a few days the entire valley is overflowed, and it presents to view immense lakes and morasses, separated by borders of trees. Thus does the kind providence of God, assist his poor creatures who inhabit these regions, by the liberality with which he ministers to their wants.

[116] These lakes and morasses, formed in the spring, are filled with fish; they remain there inclosed as in natural reservoirs, for the use of the inhabitants. The

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<sup>91</sup> Doubtless De Smet followed the well-known Indian trail which David Thompson called the “Great Road of the Flatheads,” reaching Kootenai River about on the border between Idaho and Montana, where was built a North West Company house, later abandoned. See Thompson’s description of the road in Elliott Coues (ed.) *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest* (New York, 1897), ii, p. 673; also the accompanying map by Thompson.—ED.

fish swarm in such abundance that the Indians have no other labor than to take them from the water and prepare them for the boiler. Such an existence is, however, precarious; the savages, who are not of a provident nature, are obliged to go afterwards in quest of roots, grain, berries and fruits; such as the thorny bush which bears a sweet, pleasant, blackberry; the rose-buds, mountain cherry, cormier or service berry, various sorts of gooseberries and currants of excellent flavor; raspberries, the hawthorn berry, the wappato, (*sagitta-folia*), a very nourishing, bulbous root; the bitter root, whose appellation sufficiently denotes its peculiar quality, is, however, very healthy; it grows in light, dry, sandy soil, as also the caious or biscuit root.<sup>92</sup> The former is of a thin and cylindrical form; the latter, though farinaceous and insipid, is a substitute for bread; it resembles a small white radish; the watery potatoe, oval and greenish, is prepared like our ordinary potatoe, but greatly inferior to it; the small onion; the sweet onion, which bears a lovely flower resembling the [117] tulip. Strawberries are common and delicious. To this catalogue I could add a number of detestible fruits and roots which serve as nutriment for the Indians, but at which a *civilized* stomach would revolt and nauseate. I cannot pass over in silence the camash root, and the peculiar manner in which it is prepared. It is abundant, and, I may say, is the queen root of this clime. It is a small, white, vapid onion, when removed from the earth, but becomes black

<sup>92</sup> The wappato (*sagittaria latifolia*) was an important article of food for the Northwest Indians. See descriptions of its gathering and preparation in *Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, index. The flower of the bitterroot (*Lewisia rediviva*) has been chosen as the Montana state flower; it gives name both to the river and to a range of mountains in that state. The biscuit root was probably what is known as the white-apple or prairie potato (*Psoralea esculenta*), a food-root widely spread in North America. See our volume xxi, p. 248, note 62.—ED.

and sweet when prepared for food. The women arm themselves with long, crooked sticks, to go in search of the camash. After having procured a certain quantity of these roots, by dint of long and painful labor, they make an excavation in the earth from twelve to fifteen inches deep, and of proportional diameter, to contain the roots. They cover the bottom with closely-cemented pavement, which they make red hot by means of a fire. After having carefully withdrawn all the coals, they cover the stones with grass and wet hay; then place a layer of camash, another of wet hay, a third of bark overlaid with mould, whereon is kept a glowing fire for fifty, sixty, and sometimes seventy hours. The camash thus acquires a consistency equal to that of the jujube. [118] It is sometimes made into loaves of various dimensions. It is excellent, especially when boiled with meat; if kept dry, it can be preserved a long time.<sup>93</sup>

As soon as their provisions are exhausted the Indians scour the plains, forests, and mountains, in quest of game. If they are unsuccessful in the chase, their hunger becomes so extreme, that they are reduced to subsist on moss, which is more abundant than the camash. It is a parasite of the pine, a tree common in these latitudes, and hangs from its boughs in great quantities; it appears more suitable for mattresses, than for the sustenance of human life. When they have procured a great quantity, they pick out all heterogeneous substance, and prepare it as they do the camash; it becomes compact, and is, in my opinion, a most miserable food, which, in a brief space, reduces those who live on it to a pitiable state of emaciation.<sup>94</sup>

Such are the *Arcs-a-plats*. They know neither industry, art, nor science; the words *mine* and *thine* are scarcely

<sup>93</sup> On the camas see our volume xxi, p. 247, note 61.—ED.

<sup>94</sup> *Evernia vulpina*, still used for food by the Kutenai.—ED.

known among them. They enjoy, in common, the means of existence spontaneously granted them by Nature; and as they are strangely improvident, they often pass from the greatest abundance to extreme scarcity. [119] They feast well one day, and the following is passed in total abstinence. The two extremes are equally pernicious. Their cadaverous figure sufficiently demonstrates what I here advance. I arrived among the *Arcs-a-plats* in time to witness the grand *fish festival*, which is yearly celebrated; the men only have the privilege of assisting thereat. Around a fire fifty feet long, partially overlaid with stones of the size of a turkey's egg, eighty men range themselves; each man is provided with an osier vessel, cemented with gum and filled with water and fish. The *hall* where this extraordinary feast is celebrated is constructed of rush mats, and has three apertures, one at either extremity for the entrance of guests; the middle one serves for transporting the fish. All preparations being completed, and each man at his post, the chief, after a short harangue of encouragement to his people, finishes by a prayer of supplication to the "Great Spirit," of whom he demands an abundant draught. He gives the signal to commence, and each one armed with two sticks flattened at the extremity, makes use of them instead of tongs, to draw the stones from the embers, and put them in his kettle. This process is twice renewed, and in [120] the space of five minutes the fish are cooked. Finally, they squat around the fire in the most profound silence to enjoy the repast, each trembling lest a bone be disjoined or broken,—an indispensable condition (a *sine quâ non*) of a plentiful fishery. A single bone broken would be regarded as ominous, and the unlucky culprit banished the society of his comrades, lest his presence should entail on them some dread evil.

A species of sturgeon which measures from six to ten, and sometimes twelve feet in length, is taken by the dart in the great lake of *Arcs-a-plats*.<sup>95</sup>

Since my arrival among the Indians, the feast of the glorious Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary has ever been to me a day of great consolation. I had time to prepare for the celebration of this solemn festival. Thanks be to the instructions and counsels of a brave Canadian, Mr. Berland,<sup>96</sup> who for a long time has resided among them in the quality of trader, I found the little tribe of *Arcs-a-plats* docile, and in the best disposition to embrace the faith. They had already been instructed in the principal mysteries of religion. They sang canticles in the French and Indian tongues. They number about ninety families. I celebrated the first Mass ever offered in their [121] land; after which ten adults already advanced in age and ninety children received baptism. The former were very attentive to all my instructions. In the afternoon, the erection of the cross was as solemn as circumstances would admit. There was a grand salute of ninety guns, and at the foot of the lowly standard of the God-Saviour, the entire tribe made a tender of their hearts to Him, with the promise of inviolable attachment to all the duties of true children of prayer, availing themselves of this occasion to renounce the remains of their ancient juggling and superstition. The cross was elevated on the border of a lake, and the station received the beautiful name of the Assumption. Under the auspices of this

<sup>95</sup> Kootenai Lake, in eastern British Columbia, is an enlargement of the river of the same name, seventy-five miles in length and with a width of from two to five miles. The river enters at the southern end, and leaves the lake about midway of its length opposite Pilot Bay.—ED.

<sup>96</sup> Edward Berland, a Hudson's Bay Company employe, aided Sir George Simpson on his voyage around the world in 1841. See his curious autograph reproduced in Simpson, *Narrative*, i, p. 125.—ED.





good Mother, in whose honor they have for many years sung canticles, we hope that religion will take deep root and flourish amidst this tribe, where union, innocence, and simplicity, reign in full vigor. They ardently desire to be taught agriculture, the advantages of which I have explained, and promised to procure the necessary seed and implements of husbandry.

I have the honor to be, monseigneur, your most humble and obedient servant in Jesus Christ,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

## No. VII

### A. M. D. G.

Ford of Flat-Bow River,<sup>97</sup> Sept. 2d, 1845.

MONSEIGNEUR,—The *Flat-bows* and *Koetenays* now form one tribe, divided into two branches. They are known throughout the country by the appellation of the *Skalzi*.—Advancing towards the territory of the Koetenays we were enchanted by the beautiful and diversified scenery. We sometimes traversed undulatory woods of pine and cedar, from which the light of day is partially excluded. We next entered sombre forests, where, axe in hand, we were forced to cut our way and wind about to avoid hosts of trees that had been levelled by the autumnal blasts and storms. Some of these forests are so dense that, at the distance of twelve feet, I could not distinguish my guide. The most certain way of extricating one's-self from these labyrinths, is to trust to the horse's sagacity, which, if left unguided, will follow the track of other animals. This expedient has saved me a hundred times.

<sup>97</sup> Known as Kootenai River Traverse, located in the neighborhood of the present Fort Steele. See Simpson's description of its passage in his *Narrative*, pp. 137, 138.—ED.



[123] I cannot refrain from communicating to your lordship the gloomy and harrowing thoughts which imagination conjures up in these dismal regions. The most fearful apprehensions dismay the bravest heart and cause an involuntary shudder, as some dire apparition of a bear or panther stalks in fancy before the mind, whilst groping our way amidst these dark and frightful haunts, from which there is no egress. We caught a transitory glimpse of many charming spots covered with vegetation as we pursued our winding path near the river, wherever it deviated from its natural course. At a place called the Portage, the river crosses a defile of mountains, or rather of precipitous and frightful rocks; and the traveller is compelled, for the distance of eight miles, to risk his life at every step, and brave obstacles that appear, at first sight, insuperable.<sup>88</sup>

Whatever can be imagined appalling seems here combined to terrify the heart — livid gashes of ravines and precipices, giant peaks and ridges of varied hue, inaccessible pinnacles, fearful and unfathomable chasms filled with the sound of ever-precipitating waters, long, sloping and narrow banks, which must be alternately ascended, and many times have I been obliged [124] to take the attitude of a quadruped and walk upon my hands; often during this perilous passage did I return fervent thanks to the Almighty for his protection from impending danger. Amid these stern, heaven-built walls of rocks, the water has forced its way in varied forms, and we find cataracts and whirlpools engulfing crags and trees, beneath their angry sway. Whilst the eye rests with pleasure on the rich

<sup>88</sup> De Smet is passing up the Kootenai River in its course through Montana, following the line of the present Great Northern Railway, which leaves Kootenai valley at Jennings, where the river coming from the north makes an abrupt turn to the west. A recently-built branch of this railway extends from Jennings along the upper Kootenai into British Columbia.— Ed.

and russet hues of distant slopes, upland turf and rock-hung flower — the ear is stunned by the confused sounds of murmuring rills, rushing streams, impetuous falls, and roaring torrents.

An extensive plain at the base of the Portage mountain presents every advantage for the foundation of a city. The mountains surrounding this agreeable site are majestic and picturesque. They forcibly recalled to my memory the noble Mapocho Mountains that encompass the beautiful capital of Chili (Santiago). Innumerable little rills, oozing from the mountain's stony bosom, diffuse a transparent haze over the valleys and lower slopes. The fine river Des Chutes comes roaring down and crosses the plain before it joins its waters to the McGilvray, which tranquilly pursues its course.<sup>99</sup> The quarries and forests appear inexhaustible; and having remarked [125] large pieces of coal along the river, I am convinced that this fossil could be abundantly procured. What would this now solitary and desolate land become, under the fostering hand of civilization? Indeed, the entire tract of the *Skalzi* seems awaiting the benign influence of a civilized people. Great quantities of lead are found on the surface of the earth; and from the appearance of its superior quality, we are led to believe there may be some mixture of silver.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Probably the Yaac River, a considerable mountain tributary of the Kootenai, in northwestern Montana. De Smet may, however, refer to some small stream that enters the main river near Kootenai Falls, some ten or twelve miles above the embouchment of the Yaac. David Thompson called the Kootenai, McGilvray River, in honor of the Hon. William McGillivray, one of the North West Company partners.— ED.

<sup>100</sup> De Smet was an observant traveller. The mineral wealth of Flathead County, Montana (through which he was passing), has not yet been developed; but galena ore bearing both lead and silver has been found, and considerable quantities of coal and oil are known to exist in that district. See *Report of Great Northern Railway*, 1902.— ED.

Poor, unfortunate Indians! they trample on treasures, unconscious of their worth, and content themselves with the fishery and chase. When these resources fail, they subsist upon roots and herbs; whilst they eye, with tranquil surprise, the white man examining the shining pebbles of their territory. Ah! they would tremble, indeed, could they learn the history of those numerous and ill-fated tribes that have been swept from their land, to make place for Christians who have made the poor Indians the victims of their rapacity. After a few days' journey we arrived at the Prairie du Tabac, the usual abode of the *Koetenays*.<sup>101</sup> Their camp is situated in an immense and delightful valley, bounded by two eminences, which, from their gentle and regular declivity, covered with [126] smooth pebbles, appear to have originally bounded an extensive lake.

On my arrival, I found about thirty lodges of *Koetenays*; hunger had forced many families to cross the great mountain. They came in quest of the buffalo, elk, antelope, and stag. I was received with every demonstration of joy and filial affection by those who remained in the lodges. They hailed me with a long and boisterous discharge of musketry. Several showed me their journal, consisting of a square stick on which they had notched the number of days and weeks elapsed since I abode with them in the neighborhood of the great lake Teteplatte.<sup>102</sup> They had computed forty-one months and some days.

<sup>101</sup> Tobacco Plains are situated on both sides of the international boundary, taking their name from Tobacco River, a Montana affluent of the Kootenai. This has for many years been the habitat of one division of the Upper Kutenai, known as Agkanegunik (people of the Tobacco Plains). David Thompson visited and traded there in 1808. A British Columbia branch of this tribe still has a reservation of 2,560 acres just north of the international boundary, where a band of fifty-seven was in 1902 employed in farming and cattle-raising. The Kutenai of to-day are all Roman Catholics.—ED.

<sup>102</sup> For Flathead (Tête plat) Lake see De Smet's *Letters* in our volume xxvii, p. 359, note 181.—ED.

Mr. Berland had exerted his zeal to maintain the *Koetenays* and their brethren in the good dispositions in which I had the consolation of finding them. Since my last visit they have followed, to the very letter, all they remembered of my recommendations. I was obliged to decide some controversial points, which they had misinterpreted or misapprehended. They habitually assembled for morning and evening prayer, continued the practice of singing canticles, and faithfully observed the Sabbath precept.

[127] On the feast of the Holy Heart of Mary I sang High Mass, thus taking spiritual possession of this land, which was now for the first time trodden by a minister of the Most High. I administered the Sacrament of Baptism to one hundred and five persons, among whom were twenty adults. An imposing ceremony terminated the exercises of the day. Amidst a general salute from the camp, a large cross was elevated. The chiefs, at the head of their tribe, advanced and prostrated themselves before that sacred ensign, which speaks so eloquently of the love of a Man-God, who came to redeem a fallen race. At the foot of that sacred emblem, they loudly offered their hearts to him who has declared himself our Master, and the Divine Pastor of souls. This station bears the name of the Holy Heart of Mary. One of our Fathers will soon visit the two branches of this tribe.

Though these poor people were much in want of food, they pressed me to remain some days amongst them, whilst they listened with avidity to my instructions relative to their future conduct. After my departure they divided into small bands to go in search of provisions among the defiles of the mountains.

The 30th August I bade adieu to the *Koetenays*. [128] Two young men of their tribe offered to conduct me to

the country of the *Black-feet*, and a third Indian, an expert hunter and good interpreter, completed the number of my little escort. I then journeyed on towards the sources of the Columbia.—The country we traversed was highly picturesque and agreeably diversified by beautiful prairies, from which poured forth spicy odors of flower, and shrub, and fresh spirit-elating breezes, smiling valleys and lakes, surrounded by hoary and solemn pines, gracefully waving their flexible branches. We also crossed magnificent dark Alpine forests, where the sound of the axe has never resounded; they are watered by streams which impetuously rush over savage crags and precipices from the range of mountains on the right.<sup>103</sup> This stupendous chain appears like some impregnable barrier of colossal firmness.

I am, with every sentiment of the most profound respect,  
your lordship's humble and obedient servant in Jesus Christ,

*P. J. De Smet, S. J.*

No. VIII

A. M. D. G.

Head of the Columbia,  
September 9th, 1845.

All hail! Majestic Rock—the home,  
Where many a wand'rer yet shall come,  
Where God himself from his own heart,  
Shall health, and peace, and joy impart.<sup>104</sup>

MONSEIGNEUR,—The 4th September, towards noon, I found myself at the source of the Columbia. I contemplated

<sup>103</sup> From Tobacco Plains De Smet advanced up the valley of the upper Kootenai, towards the portage near the headwaters of the Columbia. This valley runs between the main range of the Rockies and the Selkirks, among some of the most majestic scenery on the North American continent.—ED.

<sup>104</sup> Taken from a composition of De Smet's on his second journey to the Rocky Mountains (1841), and then applied to the heights around the sources of the Platte. See Chittenden and Richardson, *De Smet*, iv, pp. 1353, 1354.—ED.

with admiration those rugged and gigantic mountains where the Great River escapes — majestic, but impetuous even at its source; and in its vagrant course it is undoubtedly the most dangerous river on the western side of the American hemisphere. Two small lakes from four to six miles in length, formed by a number of springs and streams, are the reservoirs of its first waters.<sup>105</sup>

I pitched my tent on the banks of the first fork that brings in its feeble tribute, and which we behold rushing with impetuosity over the inaccessible rocks that present themselves on [130] the right. What sublime rocks! How varied in shape and figure! The fantastic in every form, the attractive, the ludicrous, and the sublime, present themselves simultaneously to the view; and by borrowing ever so little the aid of the imagination, we behold rising before our astonished eyes, castles of by-gone chivalry, with their many-embattled towers — fortresses, surrounded by their walls and bulwarks — palaces with their domes — and, in fine, cathedrals with their lofty spires.

On arriving at the two lakes, I saw them covered with swarms of aquatic birds — coots, ducks, water-fowl, cormorants, bustards, cranes, and swans; whilst beneath the tranquil water lay shoals of salmon in a state of exhaustion. At the entrance of the second lake, in a rather shallow and narrow place, I saw them pass in great numbers, cut and mutilated, after their long watery pilgrimage among the rapids, cataracts, valleys, and falls; they continue this uninterrupted procession during weeks and months.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> These are Upper Columbia and Windermere lakes, the former 2,700 feet above sea level, and the ultimate source of the Columbia River. The river is navigable from Lake Windermere as far as Golden, where the Canadian Pacific Railway crosses, and steamers ply the course of about 160 miles. The passage from one lake to the other is possible only for canoes. This region was first explored by David Thompson in 1807.— Ed.

<sup>106</sup> These are composed of gravelly flats, the great spawning beds of the Colum-



Perhaps I shall scarcely be believed when I affirm that the salmon fish are quarrelsome. I witnessed with surprise the sharp and vengeful bites they mutually inflicted. These two lakes [131] form an immense tomb, for they there die in such numbers as frequently to infect the whole surrounding atmosphere.

In the absence of man, the grey and black bear, the wolf, the eagle, and vulture assemble in crowds, at this season of the year. They fish their prey on the banks of the river, and at the entrance of the lakes;—claws, teeth and bills serving them instead of hooks and darts. From thence, when the snow begins to fall, the bears, plump and fat, resume the road back to their dens in the thick of the forests, and hollows of rocks, there to pass the four sad wintry months in complete indolence, with no other pastime or occupation, than that of sucking their four paws.

If we may credit the Indians, each paw occupies the bear for one moon, (a *month*,) and the task accomplished, he turns on the other side, and begins to suck the second, and so on with the rest.

I will here mention, *en passant*, all the hunters and Indians remark that it is a very uncommon incident for a female bear to be killed when with young, and, notwithstanding, they are killed in all seasons of the year. Where they go—what becomes of them during the period [132] they carry their young—is a problem yet to be solved by our mountain hunters.

When emigration, accompanied by industry, the arts and sciences, shall have penetrated into the numberless valleys of the Rocky Mountains, the source of the Columbia will prove a very important point. The climate is

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bia salmon. At times steamboat navigation is impeded by the immense number of the fish.—ED.



delightful; the extremes of heat and cold are seldom known. The snow disappears as fast as it falls; the laborious hand that would till these valleys, would be repaid a hundred fold. Innumerable herds could graze throughout the year in these meadows, where the sources and streams nurture a perpetual freshness and abundance. The hillocks and declivities of the mountains are generally studded with inexhaustible forests, in which the larch tree, pine of different species, cedar and cypress abound.

In the plain between the two lakes, are beautiful springs, whose waters have re-united and formed a massive rock of soft sandy stone, which has the appearance of an immense congealed or petrified cascade. Their waters are soft and pellucid; and of the same temperature as the milk just drawn from the cow.<sup>107</sup> The description given by Chandler of the famous fountain of Pambouk Kalesi, on the ancient Hieropolis of [133] Asia Minor, in the valley of Meander, and of which Malte Brun makes mention, might be literally applied to the warm springs at the source of the Columbia.<sup>108</sup> The prospect unfolded to our view was so wonderful, that an attempt to give even a faint idea of it, would savor of romance, without going beyond the limits of fact.

We contemplated with an admiring gaze, this vast slope, which, from a distance, had the appearance of chalk, and

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<sup>107</sup> The Hot Springs — one of a temperature of 120°, the other of 90° Fahrenheit — issue from natural basins of their own formation, on the side of a cliff just below Upper Columbia Lake.— Ed.

<sup>108</sup> Richard Chandler (1738-1810), an English antiquary, undertook an exploring expedition to Asia Minor and Greece (1765) under the auspices of the English Dilettanti Society. The results were published as *Travels in Asia Minor* (London, 1775), both sufficiently popular to run through several editions. The author particularly mentions the famous Hot Springs of the ancient Hierapolis, whose site is now known as Kambuk Kalessi, on the Mæander River in Phrygia, and describes their incrustations and stalactites. For the famous geographer Conrad Malte-Brun see our volume xviii, p. 345, note 136.— Ed.

when nearer, extends like an immense concreted cascade, its undulating surface resembling a body of water suddenly checked or indurated in its rapid course.

The first lake of the Columbia is two miles and a half distant from the River des Arcs-a-plats, and receives a portion of its waters during the great spring freshet. They are separated by a bottom land.<sup>109</sup> The advantages Nature seems to have bestowed on the source of the Columbia, will render its geographical position very important at some future day. The magic hand of civilized man would transform it into a terrestrial paradise.

The Canadian! Into what part of the desert has he not penetrated? The monarch who rules at the source of the Columbia is an honest emigrant [134] from St. Martin, in the district of Montreal, who has resided for twenty-six years in this desert. The skins of the rein and moose deer are the materials of which his portable palace is composed; and to use his own expressions, he EMBARKS on horseback with his wife and seven children, and LANDS wherever he pleases. Here, no one disputes his right, and Polk and Peel, who are now contending for the possession of his dominions, are as unknown to our carbineer, as the two greatest powers of the moon. His *sceptre* is a beaver trap — his *law* a carbine — the one on his back, the other on his arm, he reviews his numerous furry subjects the beaver, otter, muskrat, marten, fox, bear, wolf, sheep, and white goat of the mountains, the black-tailed roe-buck, as well as its red-tailed relative, the stag, the rein and moose deer; some of which *respect*

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<sup>109</sup> The portage from Kootenai River (Arcs-à-plats) to Upper Columbia Lake is but a mile and a half in length, over a level trail of rich black soil now known as Kootenai Flat. There is little doubt that the upper Columbia once drained this way into the Kootenai River, which now, however, is slightly higher than the source of the Columbia. A canal has been projected across the portage, but it is not yet completed.—ED.

*his sceptre* — others *submit to his law*. He exacts and receives from them the tribute of *flesh* and *skins*. Encircled by so much grandeur, undisturbed proprietor of all the sky-ward palaces, the strong holds, the very last refuge which Nature has reared to preserve alive liberty in the earth — solitary lord of these majestic mountains, that elevate their icy summits even to the clouds, — Morigeau (our Canadian) [135] does not forget his duty as a Christian. Each day, morning and evening, he may be seen devoutly reciting his prayers, midst his little family.

Many years had Morigeau ardently desired to see a priest; and when he learned that I was about to visit the source of the Columbia, he repaired thither in all haste to procure for his wife and children the signal grace of baptism. The feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, this favor was conferred on them, and also on the children of three Indian families, who accompany him in his migrations. This was a solemn day for the desert! The august sacrifice of Mass was offered; Morigeau devoutly approached the Holy Table; — at the foot of the humble altar he received the nuptial benediction; and the mother, surrounded by her children and six little Indians, was regenerated in the holy waters of baptism. In memory of so many benefits, a large cross was erected in the plain, which, from that time, is called the *Plain of the Nativity*.

I cannot leave my good Canadian without making an honorable mention of his royal CUISINE A LA SAUVAGE. The first dish he presented me contained two paws of a bear. In Africa, [136] this ragout might have given some alarm; in effect, it bears a striking resemblance to the feet of a certain race. A roast porcupine next made its appearance, accompanied by a moose's muzzle; the latter I found delicious. Finally, the great kettle contain-

ing a sort of hotch-potch, or salmagundi, was placed in the midst of the guests, and each one helped himself according to his taste.

Some remains of beef, buffalo, venison, beavers' tails, hare, partridges, &c., made an agreeable, substantial, famous soup.

I am, monseigneur, your most humble and obedient servant in Jesus Christ,

*P. J. De Smet, S. J.*

## No. IX

A. M. D. G.

Foot of the Cross of Peace,  
September 15th, 1845.

"— Here

Poplars and birch trees ever quivering played,  
And nodding cedars formed a vagrant shade;  
On whose high branches, waving with the storm,  
The birds of broadest wings their mansion form;  
The jay, the magpie, the loquacious crow,  
And soar aloft and skim the deeps below.  
Here limpid fountains from the clefts distil,  
And every fountain forms a noisy rill,  
In mazy windings wand'ring down the hill."

MONSEIGNEUR,— We bade adieu to the Morigeau family on the 9th, and to their companions of the chase, the *Sioushwaps*.<sup>110</sup> We quitted the upper valley of the Columbia by a small footpath, which soon conducted us to a narrow mountain defile, where the light of day vanished from view, amidst the huge, bold barriers of colossal rocks. The grand, the sublime, the beautiful, here form the most singular and fantastic [138] combinations. Though gray is the prevailing color, we find an immense rock of porphyry, or white-veined granite. Here and

<sup>110</sup> For the Shushwap see our volume vii, p. 159, note 52.— ED.

there, from the fissures of the rock, or wherever there is a handful of dust, the heavy and immortal pine enroots itself, adding its gloomy verdure to the variegated hues of the torpid rocks. These circuitous paths often present the most ravishing and picturesque vistas; surrounded by colossal walls, the greatest diversity and most beautiful scenery in nature is spread out before the eye, where the plush and cedar rise majestically in these venerable woods, the graceful poplar waves on high its emerald plumes, and fights its battles with the howling storm, whilst over the precipitous and jagged rocks, the scarcely-waving pine fills the brown shade with religious awe. The birch springs from an earth carpetted with moss, and shines like magnificent silver columns, supporting diadems of golden autumnal leaves, amidst the redolent purple-berried juniper and azure turpentine, of these humid dells and forests.

After a day's journey through these primeval scenes, we reached the banks of the river Arcs-a-plats, where innumerable torrents rush headlong, with a thousand mazes from the mountain's [139] brow, and in their union form this noble river. From afar is heard the deafening and continuous sound of its own dashes, as it traverses a rocky bed with extraordinary rapidity. We crossed the river in order to attempt the passage of another defile, still more wonderful, where the waters of the Vermillion have forced an opening.<sup>111</sup> Here, everything strikes the eye; all is wild sublimity, in this profound but turbulent solitude. Projecting mountains rise like holy towers where man might commune with the sky;—terrible precipices hang in fragments overhead—the astounding

<sup>111</sup> Vermillion River, one of the headstreams of the Kootenai, rises in the great group of the Rockies, near the foot of Mount Biddle, west of Laggan, on the Canadian Pacific Railway, and flows southeasterly until uniting with the Beaverfoot to form the Kootenai. See "Sketch map of the Canadian Rocky Mountains" in James Outram, *In the Heart of the Canadian Rockies* (New York, 1905).—ED.

noise of the deep-tongued waves, in their unconfined flow, resembles that of the angry tempest, sweeping wild and free, like the spirit of liberty. Now the breaking waves play low upon the rock-ribbed beach, and madly plunge into an abyss — anon it returns foaming to its sedgy bed, apparently sporting with the sedges for diversion — falling from slope to slope, from cascade to cascade, passing in its course a long train of rapids — now concealing itself under the tufted foliage of cedar and pine — again pouring its brilliant and crystalline waters into a capacious basin, as if to take breath before quitting the ravine, and [140] finally precipitating its wandering course with renovated vigor.

From this almost impenetrable forest issues a harmonious sound. 'Tis the whistling or lowing of the noble stag, calling its companion. The moose, the most vigilant of animals, gives the signal of alarm. He has heard the crackling branch — he has inhaled the hunter's deadly breath; a confused noise is heard from the mountain; the sportsman raises his eager eye to its summit, and scans a flock of rein-deer perched upon the snow; they are startled at the approach of man; in an instant they are lost among the inaccessible pinnacles, the

"Palaces where Nature thrones  
Sublimity in icy halls."

We often catch a glimpse of the graceful forms and nimble feats of the roe-bucks, as they caper and gallop, or tarry an instant to look around, with their lancet ears distended to catch every sound; these wild, forest stragglers resume their course, and finally penetrate into the sombre forest. Flocks of wild goats gambol carelessly and tranquilly beside herds of mountain sheep above overhanging precipices and peaked rocks, chequered by patches of snow, far beyond the reach of human footsteps.



[141] A monstrous animal, the grey bear, which replaces on our mountains, the African lion, is not content with growling and menacing the intrepid venturer, who dares infringe on his cavernous dominions, but grinds his teeth, expressive of his rage. Suddenly, a well-aimed gun-shot forces him to make a lowly reference; the formidable beast rolls in the dust, biting the sand saturated with his blood, and expires.

The ordinary music of the desert is, the shrill cry of the panther, and the howling of the wolf. The diminutive mountain hare, six inches high, and whose biography has not yet found a place in natural history, amuses itself amidst the stony rubbish, and exhibits wonderful activity; whilst his neighbor, the lubberly porcupine, clambers up, seats himself upon a branching cypress and gnaws the bark. He views the eager huntsman with a careless and indifferent air, unconscious that his tender flesh is regarded as a most delicious morsel. The industrious beaver, like a wary sentinel, warns his family of man's approach by striking the water with his tail. The muskrat, or musquash, plunges immediately into the water. The otter quits his sports and slides upon his belly among the reeds—the timid squirrel leaps from bough to [142] bough, until it reaches the topmost shade of the cypress; the marten jumps from tree to tree, and buries itself in the foliage—the whistler and weasel repair to their respective domicils:—a precipitous flight alone saves the fox his rich silvery pelisse—the badger, or the ground-hog, too remote from his dwelling, digs the sandy soil, and buries himself alive, to avoid pursuit—his magnificent skin is destined to adorn the loins of an Indian—it requires the joint efforts of two men to force him from his hiding place, and to kill him.

The evening previous to our egression from the blind



mazes of this tangled wood, our eyes were recreated by a ravishing scene. When it presents itself after a disastrous combat, the spectacle consoles the afflicted heart of the savage warrior. From the mountain's top we contemplated the "dance of the manitous or spirits, and the glorious entrance of departed champions into the country of souls." Vast columns of light varying in splendor, appeared to divert and balance themselves in the heavens: — some of perpendicular form; others resembling undulatory waves; now concealing, now exhibiting themselves under diversified aspects until the entire hemisphere seemed brilliantly [143] illuminated. All these masses united at the zenith, and then separated under a variety of forms.

Mysterious, solemn, cold and clear,  
Their steps majestic rise,  
Like barriers round this earthly sphere,  
Like gates of Paradise.  
Well may imagination faint  
Before your sacred blaze,  
And baffled science fail to paint  
The source of heaven-lit rays.

The aurora borealis, is a phenomenon which I always contemplate with mingled admiration and pleasure. All that is seen, all that is heard in this unfathomable solitude, is both agreeable and instructive. It strikes, captivates, and elevates the mind towards the Author of nature. *Mirabilia opera Domini!*

After much fatigue, labor, and admiration, on the 15th we traversed the high lands separating the waters of Oregon from those of the south branch of the Sascatchewan, or the ancient Bourbon river, so called before the Canadian conquest by the British.<sup>112</sup> It is the largest tributary of

<sup>112</sup> De Smet is not sufficiently precise in his topography to make it certain by which pass he crossed the Rocky Mountain divide. Probably it was that over which Sir George Simpson made his way to the westward in 1841, now known

the Winnepeg, which flows into Hudson's Bay by the River Nelson, 58 deg. north latitude.<sup>113</sup>

[144] The Christian's standard, *the cross*, has been reared at the source of these two rivers: may it be a sign of salvation and peace to all the scattered and itinerant tribes east and west of these gigantic and lurid mountains.

On the cypress which serves for constructing the cross, the eagle, emblem of the Indian warrior, perches himself. The huntsman aims—the noble bird lies prostrate, and even in his fall, seems to retain his kingly pride. It so forcibly recalls to memory the beautiful lines of the illustrious Campbell, that I quote them in full:—

Fallen as he is, the king of birds still seems  
Like royalty in ruins. Though his eyes  
Are shut, that looked undazzled on the sun,  
He was the sultan of the sky, and earth  
Paid tribute to his eyrie. It was perched  
Higher than human conqueror ever built  
His bannered fort. . . .

. . . He cloved the adverse storm  
And cuffed it with his wings. He stopped his flight  
As easily as the Arab reins his steed,  
And stood at pleasure 'neath heaven's zenith, like  
A lamp suspended from its azure dome;  
Whilst underneath him the world's mountains lay  
Like mole-hills, and her streams like lucid threads.

We breakfasted on the bank of a limpid lake at the base of the "Cross of Peace," from whence [145] I have the honor of dating my letter, and of giving you the renewed assurance of my profound respect and veneration; recommending to your fervent prayers, in a special manner,

as Simpson Pass (elevation 6,884 feet). It comes out in the neighborhood of Banff on the Canadian Pacific Railway, in the valley of Bow River, a tributary of the South Saskatchewan. See Simpson, *Narrative*, i, pp. 118-121.—ED.

<sup>113</sup> The Saskatchewan, with its two great branches, North and South, drains a large portion of the vast plain lying between the Rocky Mountains and the lake region of Manitoba, and enters Lake Winnipeg in latitude 53° 10', longitude 99° 20' west. Nelson River enters Hudson Bay near the fifty-seventh parallel of north latitude.—ED.

this vast desert, which contains so many precious souls still buried in the shades of death.

Monseigneur, your very humble and devoted servant  
in Jesus Christ,

*P. J. De Smet, S. J.*

No. X

A. M. D. G.

Camp of the Assiniboin, Sept. 26th, 1845.

"Here bloomy meads with vivid greens are crown'd,  
And glowing violets throw sweet odors round."

MONSEIGNEUR,—By a steep declivity we entered a rich valley, agreeably diversified by enamelled meads, magnificent forests, and lakes—in which the salmon-trout so abound, that in a few minutes we procured sufficient for an excellent repast. The valley is bounded on either side by a succession of picturesque rocks, whose lofty summits, rising in the form of pyramids, lose themselves in the clouds. The far-famed Egyptian monuments of Cheops and Cephren dwindle into nought, before this gigantic architectural cliff of nature. The natural pyramids of the Rocky mountains seem to deride the artificial skill of man; they serve as a resting place for the clouds that come hither to seek repose, and to encircle their giant brows. The Lord's omnipotent [147] hand has laid the foundations—he has permitted the elements to form them, and in every age they proclaim His power and glory!

We emerged from this delightful valley, on the 18th of September, after a three days' excursion, and recommenced our mountainous peregrination, which presented nothing but obstacles and contusions, both to men and horses. For the space of six hours we were compelled to trace our route across fragments of broken rocks, through

an extensive and parched forest, and where millions of half-consumed trees lay extended in every direction. Not a trace of vegetation remained, and never had I contemplated so dismal and destructive a conflagration!

We reached the River des Arcs or Askow, in the evening, and pitched our solitary tent upon the shore.<sup>114</sup> Here we discovered some vestiges of a savage party. Five days previous, nine lodges of Indians had encamped upon the very spot. We made a careful search, and my guides imagined they were the formidable Black-feet!<sup>115</sup> We, the same day, saw two smokes at the extremity of the plain over which these barbarians had travelled. My companions seemed to hesitate, as we drew near the vicinity [148] of these fearful Black-feet. They recounted to me their inauspicious dreams, and wished to deter me from proceeding. One said: "*I saw myself devoured by a wild bear;*" another, "*I saw ravens and vultures, (ill-omened birds), hovering over the head of our father;*" a third saw a bloody spectacle. I gave them, in my turn, the history of one of *my* sentries, the archetype of vigilance, courage and simplicity.

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<sup>114</sup> Bow River (des Arcs) is the northern branch of the South Saskatchewan. It rises in the Rocky Mountains above Laggan, flowing east and southeast until its junction with Belly River near longitude 111° 30'; these two then form the great South Saskatchewan. The name Rivière des Arcs is thought to have been given from its course, as it was first applied to the entire South Saskatchewan which takes a crescent course. More probably it arose from its frequent curves or "ox-bows," especially in the upper reaches, above Banff. The earliest explorers of this stream were the French, who under Lieutenant de Niverville, sent out by Legardeur de St. Pierre (1752), erected Fort La Jonquière not far from the modern town of Calgary. David Thompson explored Bow River valley for the North West Company in 1800. The upper Bow is now the route of the Canadian Pacific Railway.—ED.

<sup>115</sup> The Blackfeet are noted in our volume v, p. 225, note 120, and described in more detail by Maximilian in his *Travels*, our volume xxiii, pp. 95-122. They range into the northern part of Montana in the United States, but their usual habitat is the great plain of the Saskatchewan in the provinces of Alberta and Assiniboia.—ED.

"Midst the dark horrors of the sable night  
(No idle dream I tell nor fancy's strain)  
Thrice rose the red man's shade upon my sight,  
Thrice vanished into dusky air again.  
With courage high my panting bosom swells,  
Onward I rushed upon the threatening foe,  
When, hark! Horrific rise the spectre's yells  
He points the steel and aims the fatal blow;  
Guard, sentinel! to arms! to arms! to arms!  
Indians! Indians! my voice swelled loud and deep:  
The camp is roused at dread of my alarms,  
They wake and find — *that I am sound asleep!*

They were greatly amused at the recital of *his* imaginary fancies, and seemed to understand how little import I attached to such visions. "Happen what may," said they, "we shall never quit our father until we see him in a place of safety." This was precisely what I desired. I could not, however, deceive myself. [149] I had finally entered a land, the theatre of so many sanguinary scenes. I was now on the very confines of these barbarous people, from which, possibly, I should never return! It not unfrequently happens, that, in their unbridled fury when they hear some relative has been killed, the Black-feet despatch the first stranger they meet, scalp him — and then abandon to the wolves and dogs, the palpitating limbs of the unfortunate victim of their vengeance, hatred, and superstition. I declare to you, I was beset by a thousand disquietudes concerning the fate that awaited me. Poor nature! this timid and fragile *meus homo* is sometimes terrified. He would wish to look back and listen to dreams. My longing desires repeated incessantly — *Advance!* I placed my whole confidence in God — the prayers of so many fervent souls encouraged and re-animated me; I resolved not to be deterred by an uncertain danger. The Lord can, when he pleases, mollify these pitiless and ferocious hearts. The salvation of souls is at stake, and the preservation

of the mission of St. Mary's depends on my proceeding; for there, the incursions of the Black-feet are very frequent. What consideration could deter me from a project [150] which my heart had cherished, since my first visit among the mountains?

The 19th and 20th, we followed the tracks of our unknown predecessors, and they appeared more and more recent. I despatched my two guides to reconnoitre, and ascertain whom we were so closely pursuing.— One of them returned the same evening, with the news that he had found a small camp of Assiniboins of the forest; that they had been well received; that a disease reigned in the camp, of which two had lately died, and that they expressed great desire to see the *Black-gown*. The following morning we joined them, and journeyed several days in company.

The Assiniboins of the forest do not amount to more than fifty lodges or families, divided into several bands.<sup>116</sup> They are seldom seen in the plains; the forest is their element, and they are renowned huntsmen and warriors. They travel over the mountains and through the woods, over the different forks and branches of the sources of the Sascatchewan and Athabaska. Agriculture is unknown

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<sup>116</sup> For the Assiniboin see our volume ii, p. 168, note 75. The Assiniboin were wandering Indians grouped into many bands under separate chiefs. Early in the nineteenth century those of the woods and foothills of the Rockies became differentiated from the Assiniboin of the Plains, and were usually denominated Stoney Indians. These latter were in two bands, the Thickwood and Mountain Stoney, with dialects differing considerably from the Assiniboin of the Plains. Their characteristics were also different, they being more peaceable and inoffensive than their Eastern relatives. They were very poor, nevertheless were good hunters and energetic workers, many of them acting as guides especially in the explorations connected with the Canadian Pacific Railway surveys. First visited by Wesleyan missionaries as early as 1840, they now are largely members of that denomination. A band of about six hundred live on a reservation on Bow River near Morley, forty miles west of Calgary, not far from the region in which they were encountered by De Smet.— Ed.



to this tribe; they subsist exclusively on small animals, such as big-horns, goats, bucks; but especially on the porcupine, which swarms in this region. When pressed by [151] hunger, they have recourse to roots, seeds, and the inner bark of the cypress tree. They own few horses, and perform all their journeys on foot.

Their hunters set out early in the morning, kill all the game they meet, and suspend it to the trees, as they pass along,—their poor wives, or rather their slaves, often bearing two children on their backs, and dragging several more after them, tardily follow their husbands, and collect what game the latter have killed. They had a long file of famished dogs, loaded with their little provisions, etc. Every family has a band of six to twelve of these animals, and each dog carries from 30 to 35 lbs. weight. They are the most wretched animals in existence; from their tender-hearted masters and mistresses they receive more *bastinados* than morsels, consequently they are the most *adroit* and *incorrigible* rogues to be found in the forest. Every evening we find it necessary to hang all our property upon the trees, beyond the reach of these voracious dogs. We are even compelled to barricade ourselves within our tents at night, and surround them with boughs of trees; for, whatever is of leather, or whatever has pertained to a living being, these crafty rogues bear away, and devour. You will say I have little charity [152] for these poor brutes—but be not astonished. One fine evening, having neglected the ordinary precaution of blocking up the entrance of my tent, I next morning found myself without shoes—with a collarless cassock—and *minus* one leg to my *culottes de peau*!!! One of the chiefs of this little camp recounted to me, that last winter, one of his nation, having been reduced to extreme famine, (and such cases are not rare,) had eaten successively,

HIS WIFE AND FOUR CHILDREN. The monster then fled into the desert, and he has never been heard of since.

The Oregon missionary, Rev. Mr. Bolduc, related in his journal, that at Akena, one of the Gambia Isles, he saw an old dame, who, having had *eight* husbands, had eaten three of them, during a time of famine!! I add this last fact to give you a reverse to the above horrible picture.

The Assiniboins have the reputation of being irascible, jealous, and fond of babbling; in consequence of these bad qualities, battles and murders are not unfrequent among them, and of course continual divisions. Every evening I gave them instruction, by means of an interpreter. They appeared docile, though somewhat timorous: for they had frequently been visited [153] by persons who defamed both priests and religion. I rendered all the little services in my power to their invalids, baptized six children and an old man who expired two days after, he was interred with all the funeral ceremonies and prayers of the church.

★ Cleanliness is a virtue which has no place in the Indian catalogue of domestic or personal duties. The Assiniboins are filthy beyond conception; they surpass all their neighbours in this unenvied qualification. They are devoured by vermin, which they, in turn, consume. A savage, whom I playfully reprehended for his cruelty to these little invertebral insects, answered me: "He bit me first, I have a right to be revenged." Through complacency, I overcame natural disgust, and assisted at their porcupine feast. I beheld the Indians carve the meat on their leathern shirts, highly polished with grease — filthy, and swarming with vermin, they had disrobed themselves, for the purpose of providing a table-cloth! — They dried their hands in their hair — this is their only towel — and as the porcupine has naturally a strong and offensive

odor, one can hardly endure the fragrance of those who feast upon its flesh and besmear themselves with its oil.

[154] A good old woman, whose face was anointed with blood, (THE INDIANS' MOURNING WEEDS,) presented me a wooden platter filled with soup; the horn spoon destined for my use was dirty and covered with grease; she had the complaisance to apply it to the broad side of her tongue, before putting it into my unsavory broth.

If a bit of dried meat, or any other provision is in need of being cleansed, the dainty cook fills her mouth with water and spirts it with her whole force upon the fated object. A certain dish, which is considered a prime delicacy among the Indians, is prepared in a most singular manner, and they are entitled to a patent for the happy faculty of invention. The whole process belongs exclusively to the female department. They commence by rubbing their hands with grease, and collecting in them the blood of the animal, which they boil with water; finally, they fill the kettle with fat and hashed meat. But — HASHED WITH THE TEETH! Often half a dozen old women are occupied in this mincing operation during hours; mouthful after mouthful is masticated, and thus passes from the mouth into the cauldron, to compose the choice ragout of the Rocky mountains. Add to this, by way of an exquisite desert, an immense dish of crusts, [155] composed of pulverized ants, grass-hoppers and locusts, that have been dried in the sun, and you may then be able to form some idea of Indian luxury. X

The American porcupine, the *Hystrix dorsata*, is called by modern Zoologists, the *Prickly Beaver*. In fact there is great similarity between the two species in size and form, and both inhabit the same region. The porcupine, like the beaver, has a double peltry or fur; the first is long and soft; the second, is still softer, and greatly resembles

down or felt. They both have two long sharp, strong tusks, at the extremity of the jaw-bone. The Flat-heads affirm that the porcupine and beaver are brothers, and relate that anciently they abode together; but that, having frequently been discovered by their enemies, through the indolence, idleness and extreme aversion of the porcupines for the water, the beavers met in council and unanimously agreed upon a separation. The latter availed themselves of a fine day and invited their spiny brethren to accompany them in a long ramble, among the cypress and juniper of the forest. The indolent and heedless porcupines, having copiously regaled themselves with the savory buds of the one, and the tender rind [156] of the other, extended their weary limbs upon the verdant moss, and were soon lost in profound sleep. This was the anticipated moment for the wily beavers to bid a final adieu to their porcupine relatives.

The Assiniboins inhabiting the plains are far more numerous than their mountain brethren. They number about six hundred lodges; they own a greater number of horses, and the men, in general, are more robust, and of a commanding stature. They are more expert in thieving, are greater toppers, and are perpetually at war. They hunt the buffalo in the great plains between the Sascatshawin, the Red river, Missouri, and Yellow Stone.<sup>117</sup>

The Crows, Black-feet, Arikaras and Sioux are their most inveterate enemies.—They speak nearly the same language as the Sioux, and have the same origin.

I have the honor to be, with the most profound respect and veneration, monseigneur, your very humble and very obedient servant in Christ Jesus,

*P. J. De Smet, S. J.*

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<sup>117</sup> The Assiniboin of the Plains had been decimated by small-pox in 1838; while still a numerous tribe, they were reduced from 1,000 to 400 thinly-populated

## No. XI

A. M. D. G.

Fort of the Mountains, October 5, 1845.

MONSEIGNEUR,—The last few days we journeyed with the little Assiniboin camp, the aspect of the country offered nothing very interesting. We passed from valley to valley between two high chains of adamantine mountains, whose slopes are, here and there, ornamented with mounds of perpetual snow. A beautiful crystalline fountain issues from the centre of a perpendicular rock about five hundred feet high, and then pours its waters over the plain in foam and mist.

The 29th we separated from the Assiniboins; the path conducted us through a thick forest of cypress; I am told this is the last — DEO GRATIAS! These belts of tall firs are very numerous, and form great obstacles and barriers to land communications between the east and west of the mountains. I have a little word of advice to [158] give all who wish to visit these latitudes. At the entrance of each thick forest, one should render himself as slender, as short, and as contracted as possible, imitating the different evolutions in all encounters of an intoxicated cavalier, but with skill and presence of mind. I mean to say, he should know how to balance himself — cling to the saddle in every form, to avoid the numerous branches that intercept his passage, ever ready to tear him into pieces, and flay his face and hands. Notwithstanding these precautions, it is rare to escape without paying tribute in some manner to the ungracious forest. I one day found myself in a singular and critical position: in

lodges. They had somewhat recovered, doubtless, before Father de Smet's journey.—ED.

attempting to pass under a tree that inclined across the path, I perceived a small branch in form of a hook, which threatened me. The first impulse was to extend myself upon the neck of my horse. Unavailing precaution! It caught me by the collar of my surtout, the horse still continuing his pace.—Behold me suspended in the air—struggling like a fish at the end of a hook. Several respectable pieces of my coat floated, in all probability, a long time in the forest, as an undeniable proof of my having paid toll in passing through it. A crushed and torn hat—[159] an eye black and blue—two deep scratches on the cheek, would, in a civilized country, have given me the appearance rather of a bully issuing from the *Black Forest*, than a missionary.

To render a bad forest superlatively so, a great fall of snow is necessary. This special favor was lavished upon us in this last passage. Wo to the first pedestrians! The branches groan under the burden of their wintry shroud, and seem to present the motto: "*Si tangas frangas!*" and assuredly, at each rubbing of the hat, the least touching of the arm or leg, a deluge of snow showers down upon the shivering cavalier and horse. Immediately the branch rises proudly as if in derision. On such occasions, there is nothing better to be done than to form a rear guard, and walk in the track of the predecessor.

In pursuing our route, the 27th, on one of the branches of the river "a la Biche," (Red Deer on the maps), we remarked several sulphurous fountains, which furnish great quantities of sulphur, and a coal mine, apparently very abundant.<sup>118</sup>

I here beg the favor of a short digression from my

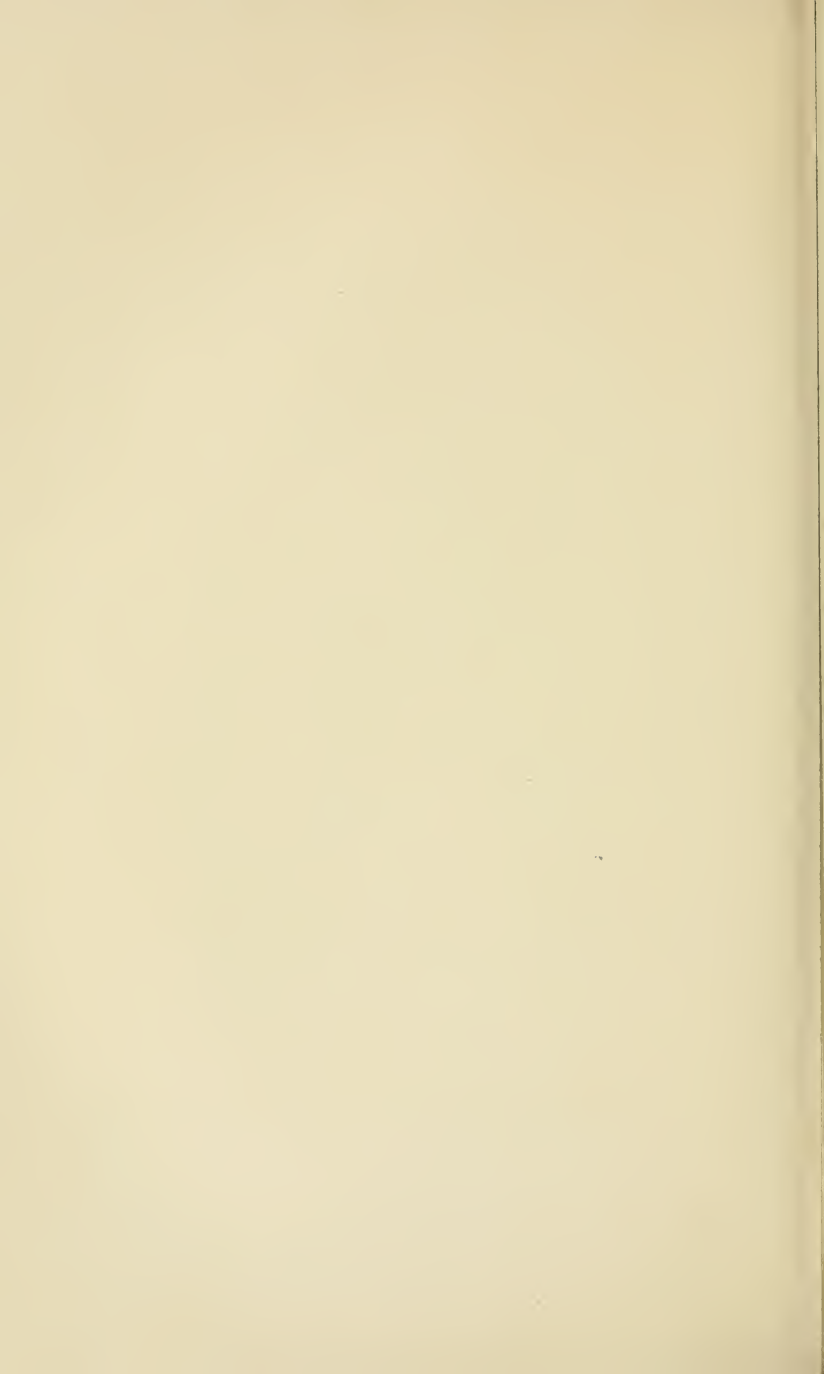
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<sup>118</sup> Red Deer River rises in the Sawback Range, nearly east of Laggan, and flowing east and southeast through the plains of Alberta empties into the South Saskatchewan in Assiniboia, just east of the hundred and tenth meridian.—ED.





Hunters at the Buffalo Feast



subject. Coal abounds east of the Rocky [160] Mountains, on the borders of the Missouri and Yellow Rock, on the Sascatchewan and Athabaska. Saltpetre is found in abundance, and iron is not scarce in many parts of the mountains. I have already spoken of lead in the country of the "Koetenays," the name of the river at the copper mine in the north, indicates its riches; bars of this precious metal are discovered among the rocks bordering the river. Rock salt is found in powder, and very plentiful in the Pays Serpent.<sup>119</sup>

The valley is picturesque and variegated; flocks of sheep and goats contribute to beautify the scenery. We find many tracks of the bears and buffaloes; on seeing the latter my party became animated; for the buffaloes' flesh is, without contradiction, the most delicate of these regions. One is never tired of it. Hitherto, the animals of the mountains had abundantly satisfied our necessities, for the huntsmen killed no less than eighteen pieces, without counting the fowl and fish which are so plentiful in this country. The same evening the remainder of our provisions was consumed, and a buffalo chase was proposed for the following day. One of the sportsmen set out early, and at breakfast time we perceived him coming, with a round [161] fat cow; immediately the ribs, tripes, etc., honored the fire with their presence. The rest of the day was spent in seeking fresh provisions.

The 30th, we continued our route through the valley, where a rivulet of clear water meanders. It is similar to all the other valleys west of the mountains, agreeably diversified with meadows, lakes, and forests—the valley widens in proportion as one descends—the rocky banks

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<sup>119</sup> Snake Country (Pays Serpent) was the term applied by the Hudson's Bay Company to the area drained by Snake (or Lewis) River, the home of the Shoshoni (or Snake) Indians.—ED.

disappear — the mountains decrease, and appear insensibly to commingle with one another. Some are covered with forests even to their tops, others present cones, elevated ramparts, covered with rich verdure.

The 4th October, after having traversed the great chain of mountains nineteen days in pursuit of the Black-Foot, we entered the vast plain, this ocean of prairies, inhabited by a multitude of roving savages, buried in the deepest superstition. The Black-Foot, Crows, Serpents, Arikaras, Assiniboins of the plains, the Sheyennes, Camanches, Sioux, Omahas, Ottos, Pawnees, Kants, Saucs, Ajouas,<sup>120</sup> etc., etc., are without pastors! We hope that Divine Providence has not deferred the epoch when the darkness now overwhelming these immense regions will give place to the beneficial light of [162] the gospel; — that worthy and zealous pastors will come to guide in the way of salvation these poor and unhappy children of the desert, who, during so many ages, have groaned under the dominion of the devil, and among whom the war-song and the cry of carnage never ceased to resound. There, we hope, will reign in their turn, peace and Christian charity, and the fragrance of divine love and praise ascend to the only true God.

The worthy Bishop of Juliopolis has established his See on the Red river, a tributary of the Winnepeg, amidst the possessions of the Anglo-Indians.<sup>121</sup> Already two of his zealous missionaries, Rev. Messrs. Thibault and Bourassa, have penetrated to the very foot of the Rocky Mountains, whilst other indefatigable priests have been employed, for many years, in extending the kingdom of God in this immense diocess. The population of Red

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<sup>120</sup> These tribes have all been previously noted — by “Kants” being meant the Kansa; by “Saucs” the Sac; and by “Ajouas” the Iowa.— ED.

<sup>121</sup> See De Smet's *Letters* in our volume xxvii, p. 391, note 213.— ED.

River is about 5,500 souls, of whom 3,175 are Catholics. There are 730 houses inhabited. I had the honor of receiving a letter from the Rev. Mr. Thibault on my arrival in this latitude. He says:

"From the month of March to September last, I have labored among the mountain nations; they are well disposed to embrace the [163] faith. I cannot give you a better idea of these people than by comparing them to the Flat-heads. I have baptized more than five hundred children and adults in the course of this mission. As soon as I find the opportunity of a water conveyance, I shall continue my labors among these good savages, and extend my route as far as McKenzie's river. A rich harvest would be there found for many laborers in the sacred ministry, for this nation is populous and occupies a vast extent of country, without including several other nations I visited this summer. 'Come, then, to us,' said they, 'we, also, shall be happy to learn the joyful news you have brought our brethren of the mountains; we are to be pitied, not knowing the word of the Great Spirit; be, therefore, charitable to us — come, teach *us* the way of salvation — we will listen to it.'

"My fellow-laborer, Bourassa, set out in September, to announce the Gospel to the Indians residing near the river de la Paix."<sup>122</sup>

From Lake St. Anne, or Manitou, the ordinary residence of these two gentlemen, they extend their apostolic course to the different tribes on the rivers Athabaska and McKenzie, Peace river, and Slave lake.<sup>123</sup>

<sup>122</sup> Jean Baptiste Thibault went as a missionary to the Red River country in 1833, and travelled widely in the great Northwest, visiting the Hudson's Bay posts and founding missions for both half-breeds and Indians from Manitoba to New Caledonia. His colleague, Joseph Bourassa, was engaged in the same work from 1844 to 1856.— ED.

<sup>123</sup> For these rivers see our volume vi, p. 354, with accompanying note. The

[164] Within the limits, as far as they have travelled, are found the Black-Foots, Crees, Assiniboins of the forest, of the mountains, Beaver Hunters, Flat-side Dogs, Slaves, and Deer-Skins.<sup>124</sup> (It is by these names that the different Indians are known among the whites and travellers.)

The great Indian district of the United States is (if I may say so) the only one deprived of spiritual succor and the means of salvation. It contains several hundred thousand savages. This vast territory is bounded on the north-west by the Anglo-Indian possessions — east by the Western States — south by Texas and Mexico — west by the Rocky Mountains. It contains many forts or trading houses, in which the greater number of persons employed are Canadian Catholics or French creoles. The principal of these forts are, Fort des Corbeaux, or Alexander, on the Yellow Stone, Fort la Ramee, on a branch of the river Platte, Fort Osage, on the river of the same name — Fort Pied-noir, or Lewis, at the mouth of the river Maria, Fort Union near the mouth of the Yellow Rock, Fort Berthold, Fort Mandan or Clark, near the mouth of the Little Missouri, Fort Pierre, Fort Look-out and Fort Vermillion at the mouth of this river, the other trading [165] houses among the Pottowatomies of Council Bluffs and of Belle-vue for the Ottos and Pawnees. The great depository which furnishes these Forts and mission at St. Ann, in Alberta about fifty miles west of Fort Edmonton, was later in charge of the Oblate Fathers, headed by Father La Combe.— ED.

<sup>124</sup> The last four tribes belong to the great Athapaskan, Déné, or Tinné stock, whose northern division occupies the northernmost interior of the American continent. The names here given (probably translated from French) are intended for the Beaver, Dogrib, Slave and Hare (or Hare-skin) tribes. In general terms their habitat may be described as follows: the Beaver upon Peace River; the Dogrib between Great Slave and Great Bear lakes; the Slaves west of Great Slave Lake, upon Mackenzie and Liard rivers; the Hares on the Mackenzie, Hare, Indian, and Anderson rivers. See A. G. Morice, in Canadian Institute *Proceedings*, 1889, pp. 109-174. These Indians still rove the great northern lands, little affected by contact with whites.— ED.



receives all the peltry and buffalo hides, is kept at St. Louis.<sup>125</sup>

Monseigneur Loras, Bishop of Dubuque, has sent two priests among the Sioux, on the river St. Pierre, a tributary of the Mississippi.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> These are all fur-trading posts, most of which De Smet had visited. They have been described in previous volumes of our series, as follows: Fort Corbeaux (Crow), or Alexander, our volume xxvii, p. 146, note 12 (De Smet); Laramie (La Ramee), xxi, p. 181, note 30; Union, xxii, p. 373, note 349; Mandan, or Clark (near Big Knife, not Little Missouri), xxii, p. 344, note 317; Pierre, xxii, p. 315, note 277; Lookout, xxii, p. 304, note 261; Vermillion, xxvii, p. 153, note 22 (De Smet); fort at Council Bluffs, xxii, p. 275, note 231; and Bellevue, xxii, p. 267, note 221. Fort Osage, originally a government post on the Missouri (not the Osage), was abandoned in 1827; see our volume v, p. 60, note 31. Probably De Smet here refers to the trading post at the Osage villages on Osage River, in what is now Kansas. Fort Pied-Noir (Blackfoot), or Lewis, was the successor of Fort Mackenzie (for which see our volume xxiii, p. 87, note 75), destroyed in 1844. Fort Lewis was built (1845) by Alexander Culbertson some distance above the old fort at the mouth of Maria's River, on the south bank of the Missouri, eighteen miles above the present city of Fort Benton, Montana; see account of founding in Montana Historical Society *Contributions*, iii, pp. 241-243 (note, however, that the dates in these reminiscences are quite unreliable). Fort Lewis, named for the explorer, Captain Meriwether Lewis, was abandoned in 1846 for the site of Fort Benton—the new post, however, retaining the name Lewis until about 1850. Fort Berthold, in McLean County, North Dakota, on the Indian reservation of that name, one hundred and twenty-five miles above Bismarck, was built as an American Fur Company post in 1845, and named for Bartholomew Berthold, one of the partners of that corporation. An opposition post (erected in 1859) was bought out in 1862, and the effects and name transferred thither. This new stockade was nearly captured by the Sioux in December, 1862. Two years later it was converted into a military post, but the soldiers being withdrawn (1867) the fort was thereafter maintained as an Indian agency, until accidentally burned in 1874; all vestiges have now disappeared. See engraving of its former appearance in O. D. Wheeler, *Trail of Lewis and Clark* (New York, 1904), i, p. 276.—Ed.

<sup>126</sup> Right Reverend Mathias Loras was born in Lyons, France, in 1792. At the age of twenty-six he was ordained priest, and in 1829 came to the United States with Bishop Portier of Mobile. He served in the latter city until chosen (1839) first bishop of the newly-created see of Dubuque. Two years later he visited Europe for recruits, returning with two priests and four deacons. Bishop Loras died at Dubuque in 1858. In 1841 he sent Augustine Ravoux, one of the deacons who had reinforced his mission (ordained priest in 1840), to visit the traders in what is now Minnesota, and attempt the founding there of a Sioux mission; he was accompanied by Father Lucien Galtier. The latter built a chapel

The Society of Jesus has a mission among the Pottowatomies on Sugar Creek, a tributary of the Osage river.<sup>127</sup> The Ladies of the Sacred Heart have an establishment here. During the summer of 1841, the late distinguished Madame de Galitzin, provincial of the Order in America, visited this section of the country for the purpose of founding, among these rude savages, a house of education, in which the hapless children of the desert now enjoy the benefit of being instructed in the Christian faith, of being formed to habits of industry and cleanliness, and acquiring a knowledge of those branches of education suited to their condition.— These two missions are located near the frontiers of the States, and are the only ones in this immense territory.

The upper Missouri, and all its branches as far as the Rocky Mountains, are without spiritual assistance [166]. Wherever *the priest* has passed in traversing the desert, he has been received with open arms among the tribes that rove over this country — alas! so long a time forgotten and neglected!

The evening of 4th October, I arrived at the Fort des Montagnes, belonging to the Hon. Hudson Bay Company, without having accomplished the object of my travels and my desires, namely, meeting the *Black-feet*.<sup>128</sup> The

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on the site of St. Paul, and gave the infant settlement its name, but in 1844 he was removed, dying in 1866 at Prairie du Chien. Father Ravoux made many missionary journeys over his wide territory — in 1845 to Fort Vermillion, in 1847 to Fort Pierre — and established an incipient Sioux mission. The withdrawal of Galtier made it imperative for Ravoux to devote himself to the care of the Catholic communicants of his wide diocese. See his *Reminiscences and Memoirs* (St. Paul, 1890). He was still living in 1904.— ED.

<sup>127</sup> For the Potawatomi mission see De Smet's *Letters* in our volume xxvii, p. 156, note 26. Its first site in Kansas was as here stated; later (1848) it was removed to Kansas River, and during the early settlement was well known as St. Mary's Mission — afterwards, simply St. Mary's. The mission school was continued until 1869. A town of this name is in the southeastern corner of Pottawatomie County.— ED.

<sup>128</sup> Several posts of the Hudson's Bay Company were known as the Rocky

respectable and worthy commander of the Fort, Mr. Harriot, an Englishman by birth, is among the most amiable gentlemen I have ever had the pleasure of meeting. He invited, and received into his hospitable Fort the poor missionary, a Catholic and stranger, with politeness and cordiality truly fraternal. These qualities characterize all the gentlemen of the Hudson Bay Company, and although Mr. Harriot is a Protestant, he encouraged me to visit the *Black-feet*, who would soon arrive at the Fort, promising me to use all his influence with these barbarians to obtain me a friendly reception. He has resided many years among them, nevertheless he did not conceal from me that I should soon be exposed to great dangers. "We are in the hands of God — may His holy will be done."

[167] I am, with the most profound respect and esteem, monseigneur, your very humble and obedient servant in Jesus Christ,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

## No. XII

A. M. D. G.

Fort of the Mountains, October 30th, 1845.

MONSEIGNEUR,— A band of about twenty Crees, encamped near the Fort, came to shake hands cordially with me on my arrival. The joy my presence seemed to occasion them, proved that I was not the first priest they had seen. Moreover, the greater number wore medals and crosses.

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Mountain House; but this one, upon the North Saskatchewan, had no other name. It was founded in 1802 by the North West Company, and David Thompson was in charge 1806-07, making thence his first expedition west of the mountains. It was located about a mile and a half above the mouth of the Clearwater, on the south bank of the Saskatchewan. See *Explorations by Captain John Palliser* (London, 1863), pp. 74-77, descriptive of the expedition sent by the government in 1857-59.—ED.

They informed me that they too had been so fortunate as to have a *Black-Gown*, (Rev. Mr. Thibault,) who taught them to know and serve the Great Spirit — and baptized all their little children, with the exception of three, who were absent on the occasion. These children were brought to me — I administered baptism to them, and at the same time to one of my guides, a Koetenay. During their stay at the Fort, I gave them instructions every evening.

Two Crees, of the same band and family, father and son, had been killed in a quarrel two [169] years since. The presence of the offending party for the first time since the perpetration of the murder, rekindled in the others that spirit of rancor and revenge so natural to an Indian's breast, and there was every reason to apprehend fatal consequences from the old feud.

With the approbation of Mr. Harriot, I assembled them all in the Fort; the governor himself had the kindness to be my interpreter. He made a long discourse on the obligation and necessity of their coming to a sincere reconciliation; the matter was discussed in form, each Indian giving his opinion in turn, with a good sense and moderation that surprised me. I had the pleasure and satisfaction of seeing the calumet passed around the assembly. This is the solemn pledge of peace — the token of Indian brotherhood — the most formal declaration of the entire forgetfulness and sincere pardon of an injury.

The Cree nation is considered very powerful, and numbers more than six hundred wigwams. This tribe is one of the most formidable enemies of the Black-Foots, and continually encroaches upon the territory of its adversaries. The preceding year they carried off more than six hundred horses. The actual limit of the country [170] they traverse extends from the bases of the Rocky Mountains, between

the two forks of the Saskatshawin, some distance beyond the Red River. Their turbulent and warlike spirit, and rapacity for plunder, especially for horses, are among the great obstacles which retard the conversion of the larger portion of this tribe.

The example of their brethren, who listen with docility to the exhortations of their zealous and indefatigable missionary will, we trust, produce fruit in due time, and be imitated by the entire nation.

To give you an idea of their military discipline, and of the profound superstition in which these unfortunate people are still immersed, I will relate to you some of their proceedings.

The Crees were meditating a deadly stroke upon the Black-Foots, and for this purpose they collected all their ready forces, amounting to more than eight hundred warriors. Before setting out in quest of the enemy, every species of juggling and witchcraft imaginable was resorted to, in order to secure the success of the expedition. It was decided that a young girl, with a bandage over her eyes, should be placed at the head of the Indian army, and thus blindfold, serve as a guide to the combatants. In case [171] of success, the heroine was destined to become the bride of the most valiant. According to the Oracle, none but the great *chief* himself had the privilege of shoeing or unshoeing her.

This concluded, they began their march, intoxicated with confidence and presumption, following this extraordinary guide over the hills and valleys, ravines, marshes, and swamps. One day she would direct her steps towards the north, the next to the south or west — the point of the compass mattered naught — the Manitou of war was supposed to guide her, and day after day the infatuated Crees continued to follow the steps of the blindfolded

Indian. They had already penetrated far into the plain, when they were discovered by a party of seven Black-feet. The latter might easily have escaped under favor of the night, but the Partisan, or Black-foot Chieftain, a man of undaunted courage, determined to oppose this formidable force. With the aid of their poniards they made themselves a hollow, in which they took shelter.

The following morning, at day-break, the eight hundred champions surrounded their feeble prey. The first who pressed forward to dislodge them were driven back several times, with the loss of seven men and fifteen wounded. The failure of [172] ammunition at length put the Black-feet at the mercy of the Crees, by whom they were cut into pieces. The first engagement threw the victorious party into consternation, for they too numbered seven killed and fifteen wounded. They removed the bandage from the young heroine's eyes, and the *Manitous* whom they had thought so propitious, being now judged unfavorable to their warlike projects, the warriors hastily dispersed, taking the nearest road back to their respective homes.

The Crees have rather a singular custom among them, and one contrary to the practice of other nations. They stain the faces of the warriors who fall in combat, clothe them in their richest ornaments, and thus expose them in places conspicuous to their enemies. They place near them their guns, bows and arrows, to show that in their death there was no cause for compassion; and this they do purposely that they may be cut into pieces — an opportunity which an enemy never suffers to escape, and which a Cree warrior regards as the height of his wishes. Other nations, on the contrary, carry off and conceal their dead, to save them from the rapacity and insults of their enemies, and to be cut into pieces, even after death, is [173] considered a great dishonor among them.— The Crees and



*Sauteux* are allies, and considerably intermixed by reciprocal marriages. The latter form the most numerous and widely-diffused nation of these parts.— They are to be met with from the confines of Lower Canada even to the foot of the Rocky Mountains.<sup>129</sup>

This is also the nation of medicine, *par excellence*:— for all pretend to be jugglers, and sell their medicines and quackery at a high price. In consequence of this attachment to their old, superstitious practices, and the great profits they derive from them, the seed of the Divine Word has hitherto fallen upon an unprofitable soil. An adroit impostor who has been baptized, and who is, moreover, a great medicine man among them, has contributed not a little to keep his nation in an obstinate ignorance, which makes them prefer the shades of paganism to the beneficial light of the gospel. Falling one day into a species of lethargy, it was thought that he had expired — but recovering after a short time, he assembled his band; and told them the following story:

“Immediately after my death I repaired to the heaven of the white man, or Christians, where the Great Spirit and Jesus Christ dwell, [174] but they refused to admit me on account of my red skin. I then went to the country where the souls of my ancestors are, and there, too, I was refused admittance on account of my baptism. I am, therefore, come back to this earth, to renounce the promises I made in baptism and resume my medicine bag, hoping to expiate my former error by my sincere attachment to

<sup>129</sup> For the *Sauteux* see J. Long's *Voyages*, in our volume ii, p. 79, note 38. The Chippewa are the most numerous tribe of the Algonquian stock, large numbers being still found in both Canada and the United States, with a range nearly as wide as De Smet here gives them. In the United States, however, their habitat never extended much beyond Minnesota, where they were met by their hereditary enemies, the Dakota (or Sioux). In Canada, their alliance with the Cree gave them a farther westward range, and they occasionally traded at Fort Edmonton on the upper Saskatchewan.— ED.

jugglery, and thus render myself once more worthy of the beautiful and spacious plains of that happy and delightful abode, where reigns everlasting spring, and numberless flocks and herds afford an abundant and everlasting subsistence to all the inhabitants of the Indian Elysium."

This extravagant report which has been circulated throughout the whole tribe and among the neighboring people, has greatly contributed to attach them to their old customs and superstitions,—and make them turn a deaf ear to the instructions of their worthy missionary.

The Rev. Mr. Belcourt has, notwithstanding, succeeded in converting a considerable number, whom he has persuaded to renounce the illusions of their brethren, and united in a village at St. Paul des Sauteurs, where they persevere fervently in all the practices of religion. The [175] number of faithful, in this spot, increases every year.<sup>130</sup>

At length, on the 25th October, thirteen Black-Foot arrived at the Fort. They saluted me with a politeness truly *à la sauvage*, rough and cordial, at the same time. The old chief embraced me quite tenderly when he learned the object of my journey. He was distinguished from his companions by his dress—being decorated from head to foot with eagles' plumes, and wearing a large breast-plate in form of medallion, *figured with blue*, as a mark of distinction. He was profuse in attention to me, making me sit beside him whenever I went to visit them in their apartment—shaking me affectionately by the

<sup>130</sup> George A. de Belcourt arrived in the Red River country in 1831, and spent twenty-eight years as a missionary in this territory, officiating also at Pembina under commission from Bishop Loras of Dubuque. The Chippewa mission here mentioned was situated on Winnipeg River, at a place whose native name was Wabassimong. In 1846, the Oblate Father Aubert was placed in charge; but lack of success rendered it necessary to abandon the mission the following year. The log church which had been erected was used some years later by Protestant missionaries. See Alexandre Taché, *Vingt Années de Missions dans le Nord-Ouest de l'Amérique* (Montreal, 1866).—ED.

hand and amicably rubbing my cheeks with his scarlet-painted nose. He cordially invited me to his country, offering to be my guide and to introduce me to his people. The difference of physiognomy existing between the Indians inhabiting the plains east of the mountains and those near the upper waters of the Columbia, is as great as the stupendous rocks that separate them. The latter are remarkable for their mildness, serenity and affability, while cruelty, craft — the word BLOOD, in fine, may be read in every feature of the Black-Foot Indian. [176] Scarcely could an innocent hand be found in the whole nation. The Lord, however, is all powerful — “from stones he can raise up children unto Abraham,” and, full of confidence in the treasures of His holy grace and mercies, I purpose to visit them. The essential point and my greatest perplexity is, to find a good and faithful interpreter; the only one now at the Fort is a suspicious and dangerous man: <sup>131</sup> all his employers speak ill of him — he makes fine promises. In the alternative of either renouncing my project or being of some utility to those poor, unfortunate Indians, I accept his services. May he be faithful to his engagement!

I have the honor to be, monseigneur, your very humble and very obedient servant in Jesus Christ,

*P. J. De Smet, S. J.*

### No. XIII

A. M. D. G.

Fort of the Mountains, October 30th, 1845.

THE year 1845 will be a memorable epoch in the sad

<sup>131</sup> This was the half-breed known as Bird, whose treachery toward Antoine Godin at Fort Hall, Idaho, is narrated by Townsend in our volume xxi, pp. 353, 354; see also our volume xxiii, pp. 135, 145, 153.— ED.

annals of the Black-Foot nation. It has been a year of disasters. In two skirmishes with the Flat-heads and Kalispels, they lost twenty-one warriors. The Crees have carried off a great number of their horses, and twenty-seven scalps. The Crows have struck them a mortal blow — fifty families, the entire band of the *petite Robe*, were lately massacred, and one hundred and sixty women and children have been led into captivity.<sup>132</sup>

What a dreadful state for these unfortunate beings. In the first excitement, numbers of the captives were sacrificed by the Crow squaws to the manes of their husbands, brothers, fathers, or children. The survivors were condemned to slavery. The smallpox shortly after made its appearance in the conquerors' camp, and spread [178] rapidly from lodge to lodge. The Black-Foot had suffered from this scourge a few years previous, and thousands had fallen victims to it.

The Crows, therefore, interrogated their captives to know by what means they had escaped death. A dark spirit of vengeance seized the latter; they counselled cold baths as the only efficacious remedy, to stop the progress of the disease. The sick immediately plunged into the water, and mothers went to the river to bathe their little children. Some plunged into their graves; others gave up their last sigh while endeavoring to reach the shore — and disconsolate mothers returned to their cabins with dead or expiring infants in their arms. Cries of despair succeeded to the shouts of victory — desolation and mourning replaced the fanatic, barbarous joy of

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<sup>132</sup> This band of Blackfeet, which took its name from an important chief, was mentioned by George Catlin in 1832, being said to consist of two hundred and fifty lodges. Father de Smet says that they were almost entirely destroyed. Charles Larpenteur, however, mentions this band as on the war path against the Flatheads in 1848; see his *Forty Years a Fur Trader* (New York, 1898), ii, pp. 259-261.—ED.

the Crows. Death visited every tent of the victorious camp!

The tradition of man's creation and future immortality exists among most of the Indian tribes; I have had the opportunity of visiting and questioning them on the subject. Those who live by fishery, suppose their Heaven to be full of lakes and rivers, abounding in fish, whose enchanted shores and verdant islands produce fruits of every kind.

[179] I encamped on the banks of two lakes to the east of the Rocky Mountains, which the Black-Foot call the *lake of men* and the *lake of women*. According to their traditions, from the first of these issued a band of young men, handsome and vigorous, but poor and naked. From the second an equal number of ingenious and industrious young women, who constructed and made themselves clothing. They lived a long time separate and unknown to each other, until the great Manitou Wizakeschak, or the old man, (still invoked by the Black-Foot,) visited them; he taught them to slay animals in the chase, but they were yet ignorant of the art of dressing skins. Wizakeschak conducted them to the dwelling of the young women, who received their guests with dances and cries of joy. Shoes, leggins, shirts, and robes, garnished with porcupine quills, were presented them. Each young woman selected her guest, and presented him with a dish of seeds and roots; the men, desiring to contribute to the entertainment, sought the chase, and returned loaded with game. The women liked the meat, and admired the strength, skill, and bravery of the hunters. The men were equally delighted with the beauty of their trappings, and admired the industry of the women. [180] Both parties began to think they were necessary to each other, and Wizakeschak presided at the solemn compact

in which it was agreed that the men should become the protectors of the women, and provide all necessities for their support: whilst all other family cares should devolve upon the women.

The Black-Foot squaws often bitterly complain of the astonishing folly of their mothers in accepting such a proposition; declaring, if the compact were yet to be made, they would arrange it in a very different manner.

The Black-Foot heaven is a country composed of *sandy hills*, which they call *Espatchekie*, whither the soul goes after death, and where they will find again all the animals they have killed, and all the horses they have stolen. The buffalo, hind, and stag, abound there. In speaking of the departed, a Black-Foot never says, such a one is dead, but *Espatchekie etape* — to the *Sand hills* he is gone.

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Fort Auguste, on the Saschatshawin,

December 31st, 1846.

MONSEIGNEUR,—I arranged with the thirteen Black-Foot of whom I spoke in my last, that [181] they should precede me among their people, to pave the way, as it were, and prepare their minds to receive me.—Everything seemed propitious, and accordingly, on the 31st of October, I took leave of the friendly Mr. Harriot. I was accompanied by my interpreter, a young Metif of the Cree nation, who had charge of the horses. Notwithstanding his good resolutions, my interpreter did not long leave me in doubt of his true character. The wolf cannot remain concealed beneath the sheep's clothing. He became sullen and peevish, always choosing to halt in those places where the poor beasts of burden could find nothing to eat, after their long day's journey. The farther we penetrated into the desert, the more and more sulky he became. It



was impossible to draw from him a single pleasant word, and his incoherent mutterings and allusions became subjects of serious apprehension. Thus passed ten sorrowful days; my last two nights had been nights of anxiety and watching; when fortunately, I encountered a Canadian, on whom I prevailed to remain with me some time. The following day my interpreter disappeared. Although my situation was extremely precarious in this dangerous desert, without interpreter, without guide, [182] yet I could not but feel relieved of a heavy burden by the departure of this sullen and gloomy fellow. Had it not been for my opportune meeting with the Canadian, it is probable I should not have escaped his deep laid scheme against me.

Friends and travellers in the desert, beware of choosing for your guide, or placing your dependence on a morose Metif, especially if he has been for some time a resident among the savages; for such men usually possess all the faults of the white man joined to the cunning of the Indian. I determined to continue my route in search of a Canadian interpreter, whom we understood was some distance in advance of us on the same road. For eight successive days we wandered on in that labyrinth of valleys, but in vain; although in the heart of their territory, neither the Canadian nor the Black-Foot were to be found. Large marauding parties of the Crees were beating the country at that time, and it appeared evident from the tracks, that they had carried everything before them. It snowed without intermission during four days; — our poor horses were nearly exhausted — my wallet contained nothing but crumbs — the passage from the east to the western [183] side of the mountains was become impracticable, and I had no alternative, but to repair to one of the forts of the Hudson Bay Company, and beg hospitality during the inclement season.

The entire region in the vicinity of the first eastern chain of the Rocky Mountains, serving as their base for thirty or sixty miles, is extremely fertile, abounding in forests, plains, prairies, lakes, streams, and mineral springs. The rivers and streams are innumerable, and on every side offer situations favorable for the construction of mills. The northern and southern branches of the Saskatchewan water the district I have traversed, for a distance of about three hundred miles. Forests of pine, cypress, thorn, poplar and aspen trees, as well as others of different kinds, occupy a large portion of it, covering the declivities of the mountains, and banks of the rivers.

These, ordinarily, take their rise in the highest chains, whence they issue in every direction like so many veins. The beds and sides of these rivers are pebbly, and their courses rapid, but as they recede from the mountains they widen, and the currents lose something of their impetuosity. Their waters are usually very clear. In this climate wens are not unfrequent. [184] The country would be capable of supporting a large population, and the soil is favorable for the produce of barley, corn, potatoes, and beans, which grow here as well as in the more southern countries.

Are these vast and innumerable fields of hay forever destined to be consumed by fire, or perish in the autumnal snows? How long shall these superb forests be the haunts of wild beasts? And these inexhaustible quarries, these abundant mines of coal, lead, sulphur, iron, copper, and saltpetre — can it be that they are doomed to remain for ever inactive? Not so — the day will come when some laboring hand will give them value: a strong, active, and enterprising people are destined to fill this spacious void. — The wild beasts will, ere long, give place to our domestic animals; flocks and herds will graze in the

beautiful meadows that border the numberless mountains, hills, valleys, and plains of this extensive region. A large portion of the surface of the country is covered with artificial lakes, formed by the beavers. On our way, we had frequently occasion to remark, with wonder and admiration, the extent and height of their ingeniously constructed dams and solid lodges. These are remains of the admirable [185] little republics, concerning which so many wonders have justly been recorded. Not more than half a century ago, such was the number of beavers in this region, that a good hunter could kill a hundred in a month's space.

I reached Fort Augustus or Edmondton towards the close of the year. Its respectable Commandant, the worthy Mr. Rowan, received me with all the tenderness of a father, and together with his inestimable family, showed me every kindness and attention.<sup>133</sup> Never shall I have it in my power to cancel the debt of gratitude I owe them.—May heaven protect and repay them with its choice blessings; such is the most sincere prayer of a poor priest, who will ever remember them.

I must await a more favorable moment for visiting the Black-Foots. The skirmishing parties appear to be still scouring the country. The tidings which reach us concerning them tell only of plunder and bloodshed. Meanwhile, I have the honor of being, with profound respect and esteem, Monseigneur, your very humble and obedient servant in Jesus Christ,

*P. J. [De] Smet, S. J.*

<sup>133</sup> John Rowand was born at Montreal and entered the North West Company as a clerk in 1800. He was in charge at Fort Augustus for many years and there was born his son who became widely known in Northwest annals. Educated at Montreal and Edinburgh, he travelled abroad before returning to the Northwest, where he was for many years a chief factor of the company. He accompanied Sir George Simpson on his journey of 1841, and in 1848 retired from active service, settling in Quebec, where he died in 1889. See *Henry-Thompson Journals*, ii, pp. 602, 603; and Chittenden and Richardson, *De Smet*, iv. pp. 1559-1561.—ED.

## No. XIV

A. M. D. G.

Fort Jasper, April 16th, 1846.

MONSEIGNEUR,—Fort Edmondton or Auguste is the great emporium of the Hudson Bay Company in the districts of Upper Sascatchewan and Athabasca:<sup>134</sup> Forts Jasper, Assiniboine, Little Slave Lake, on the river Athabasca,<sup>135</sup> Forts des Montagnes, Pitt, Carrollton, Cumberland, on the Sascatchewan, depend on it.<sup>136</sup> The respectable and worthy Mr. Rowan, Governor of this immense district, unites, to all the amiable and polite qualities of a perfect gentleman, those of a sincere and hospitable friend; his goodness and paternal tenderness render him a true patriarch amidst his charming and numerous family. He is esteemed and venerated by all the surrounding tribes, and though advanced in age, he possesses extraordinary activity.

<sup>134</sup> For Fort Edmonton (or Fort Augustus) see our volume vi, p. 364, note 177. A nearly contemporary description may be found in Simpson, *Narrative*, i, pp. 101, 102.—ED.

<sup>135</sup> For Fort Jasper see our volume vi, p. 357, note 167.

Assiniboine House was built in 1825 on the north side of Athabasca River, in northern Alberta; the place is now abandoned and ruined. See Alexander Ross, *Fur Hunters of the Far West* (London, 1855), ii, p. 204.

Lesser Slave Lake House, at the western end of the lake, was built by Alexander Stuart of the North West Company early in the nineteenth century.—ED.

<sup>136</sup> For Fort des Montagnes see *ante*, p. 234, note 128.

Fort Pitt was established in 1831, not far below old Fort Vermillion, about half way between Carlton and Edmonton, on the south bank of the Saskatchewan, about a hundred yards from the river. See description of its appearance in 1859, in Earl of Southesk, *Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains* (Edinburgh, 1875), pp. 139-142, 285-292.

Fort Carlton (Carrollton) was the Hudson's Bay post replacing the old Fort de la Montée, for which see our volume vi, p. 374, note 185. Sir George Simpson well describes its appearance in 1841 in his *Narrative*, i, p. 84. For Cumberland House see our volume vi, p. 376, note 188.—ED.

The number of servants at Edmondton, including children, is about eighty. They form a [187] well-regulated family. Besides a large garden, a field of potatoes and wheat, belonging to the establishment, the lakes, forests, and plains of the neighborhood furnish provisions in abundance. On my arrival at the Fort, the ice-house contained thirty thousand white fish, each weighing four pounds, and five hundred buffaloes, the ordinary amount of the winter provisions. Such is the quantity of aquatic birds in the season, that sportsmen often send to the Fort carts full of fowls. Eggs are picked up by thousands in the straw and reeds of the marshes.

The greater number of those employed being Catholics, I found sufficient occupation. Every morning I catechized the children, and gave an instruction; in the evening, after the labors of the day, I recited the prayers for the honorable Commander and his servants. I must acknowledge, to the credit of the inhabitants of Edmondton, that their assiduity and attention to religious duties, and the kindness and respectful regard evinced for me, were a source of great consolation during my sojourn of two months among them. May God, who has granted them so liberally and plentifully the dews of the earth, enrich them likewise with those of Heaven; [188] such is the most sincere wish and prayer of a friend who will never forget them.

I visited Lake St. Anne, the ordinary residence of Messrs. Thibault and Bourassa; the latter gentleman was absent. The distance from the fort to the lake is about fifty miles. I mentioned this interesting mission in my preceding letters, and I will now say a word relative to the country. — The surface of this region is flat for the most part, undulating in some places — diversified with forests and meadows, and lakes teeming with fish. In Lake St. Anne

alone were caught, last autumn, more than seventy thousand white fish, the most delicious of the kind; they are taken with the line at every season of the year.

Notwithstanding the rigor and duration of the winter in this northern region, the earth in general appears fertile; vegetation is so forward in the spring and summer, that potatoes, wheat and barley, together with other vegetables of Canada, come to maturity. Lake Saint Anne forms one of a chain of lakes; I counted eleven of them, which flow into the Saskatchewan by the small river Esturgeons, or *Sturgeon*. Innumerable republics of beavers formerly existed there;—each lake, each marsh, each river, [189] bears, even to this day, proofs of their labors. What I here say of beavers is applicable to almost all the Hudson territory. When the reindeer, buffalo, and moose abounded, the Crees were then peaceful possessors;—animals have disappeared, and with them the ancient lords of the country. Scarcely do we meet with a solitary hut—but now and then the tracks of some large animal. Seventeen families of Metifs, descendants of English Canadians and savages, have assembled and settled around their missionaries. The Crees have gained the buffalo plains, and they contend for them with the Black-Foots, whose mortal foes they have become.

In proportion as the rigors of winter began to give place to the cheering dawn of spring, simultaneously did my pulse beat to approach near the mountain, there to await a favorable opportunity to cross it, so that I might arrive as early as possible at the mission of St. Ignatius.

The 12th of March, I bade farewell to the respectable Rowan family, and to all the servants of the Fort. I was accompanied by three brave Metifs, whom Mr. Thibault was so kind as to procure me. At this season, the whole country lies buried in snow, and voyages are [190] made



in sledges drawn by dogs. Our provisions and baggage were conveyed in two of these sledges; the third, drawn by four dogs, was reserved for me. I found this mode of travelling quite a novelty; and on the glittering ice of the rivers and lakes, it was particularly convenient and agreeable. The third day we encamped near Lake de l'Aigle Noir, which abounds in white fish; on the sixth, we arrived at Fort Assiniboine,<sup>137</sup> built in a meadow on the river Athabasca, where it is two hundred and thirty-three fathoms broad, which breadth it seems to preserve more or less until it leaves the Rocky Mountains, its current is extremely rapid. In the spring it can be descended in three days from Fort Jasper to Fort Assiniboine, a distance of more than three hundred miles. With our sledges we were nine days accomplishing the journey. The bed of the river is studded with islands, which, by their various positions and features, render the prospect very agreeable. Its shores are covered with thick forests of pine intersecting rocks and high hills which embellish and give a touch of the picturesque to the general monotony of the desert.

The principal branches are the Pembina, which measures four hundred and sixty-four [191] feet across—the river des Avirons, one hundred and twenty-eight feet; the river Des Gens Libres, the branch McCloud, and river Baptist Berland, are about eighty fathoms wide at their mouth. The rivers Du Vieux, du Milieu, des Prairies, and des Roches, form beautiful currents.<sup>138</sup> Lake Jasper,

<sup>137</sup> The Lake of the Black Eagle does not appear to be charted, but the entire country between Forts Edmonton and Assiniboine abounds in lakes. This route was followed by Ross in 1825; see his *Fur Hunters*, ii, pp. 205, 209.—ED.

<sup>138</sup> For the Pembina see our volume vi, p. 364, note 177. It is not feasible to identify all these affluents of the upper Athabasca. Next to Pembina, the largest of those mentioned is McLeod (McCloud) River, a southern branch coming in some fifty miles above old Fort Assiniboine. The Baptiste (the additional word Berland has been dropped) flows from the west, entering the Athabasca where it bends to the east.—ED.

eight miles in length, is situated at the base of the first great mountain chain. The fort of the same name, and the second lake, are twenty miles higher, and in the heart of the mountains.<sup>139</sup> The rivers Violin and Medicine on the southern side, and the Assiniboine on the northern, must be crossed to arrive there,<sup>140</sup> and to reach the height of land at the *du Committees Punch Bowl*, we crossed the rivers Maline, Gens de Colets, Miette and Trou, which we ascended to its source.<sup>141</sup> The river Medicine mingles its waters with those of the Sascatchewan; the Assiniboine and Gens de Lolets with those of the Boucane, a tributary of a la Paix.<sup>142</sup> The waters of the Miette, have their source at the same height, with some branches of the river Frazer, which crosses New Caledonia.<sup>143</sup>

Some years since, the valleys and high forests of Atha-

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<sup>139</sup> Of the two lakes at the headwaters of the Athabasca, both are sometimes called Jasper, but the lower one was more frequently known as Burnt (or Brulé) Lake. For these and Jasper House see our volume vi, p. 357, note 167.—ED.

<sup>140</sup> The names of these streams appear to change frequently. The Violin is now known as Fiddle River; it debouches from the south, near the upper end of Brulé Lake. Medicine appears to be identical with the stream called Rocky River, coming from very near the source of the North Saskatchewan. The Assiniboine is now usually called Snake Indian River; it takes its name from a small tribe that frequented its banks, who were totally exterminated early in the nineteenth century by a fierce band of Assiniboin.—ED.

<sup>141</sup> The Maligne is a large stream coming from the south, not far from the source of the Brazeau. Gens de Colets is now known as Snaring River; it enters the Athabasca some miles above Jasper Lake. The Miette comes from the west and joins the Athabasca at its abrupt turn from north to east. The trail to Yellowhead Pass follows up the Miette, while that to Athabasca Pass follows the main Athabasca River, to the Trou (or Hole), more frequently Whirlpool River.—ED.

<sup>142</sup> The Boucane is now Smoky River, the largest southwest affluent of Peace (a la Paix) River.—ED.

<sup>143</sup> For Fraser River see Farnham's *Travels*, ante, p. 43, note 52.

A small branch of the Miette approaches within a few rods, on the summit of Yellowhead Pass of the upper source of the Fraser, running thence into Yellowhead, and sixteen miles lower down Moose Lake, whence issues the main Fraser.—ED.

basca were exclusively appropriated to the chase by the Assiniboinés of the forests: [192] the scarcity of game forced them to quit their land — since their departure the animals have increased in an astonishing manner. In various places on the river, we saw ravages of the beavers which I should have taken for recent encampments of savages, so great a quantity of felled trees was there. Many wandering families of the carrier tribe and Achiganes or Sock Indians of New Caledonia,<sup>144</sup> compelled by hunger, have quitted their country, traversed the last of the mountains, and now cross the valleys of this region in quest of food. They nourish themselves with roots, and whatever they can catch, many of them have their teeth worn to the gums by the earth and sand they swallow with their nourishment. In winter they fare well: for then the moose, elk and reindeer are plentiful. The reindeer feed on a kind of white moss, and the paunch is considered delicious when the food is half digested. By way of a dainty morsel, the Indians pluck out the eyes of fish with the end of the fingers and swallow them raw, likewise the tripes with their whole contents, without further ceremony than placing them an instant on the coals, from thence into the omnibus or general reservoir, without even undergoing the operation of the jaws.

[193] The Montagnees Indians <sup>145</sup> inhabit the lower part

<sup>144</sup> For the Carrier Indians, see our volume xxvii, p. 307, note 160. They are the main branch of the Déné (Tinneh) stock, in British Columbia. See Rev. A. G. Morice, "Are the Carrier Sociology and Mythology exotic?" in Canadian Royal Society *Transactions*, x, part ii, pp. 109-120, with map giving location of the tribes of New Caledonia.

By the Achiganes, De Smet probably intends the Sekanais (Tsekenné), who inhabit the western slopes of the Rockies from latitude 54° to 60°. They are a nomadic people of the Déné stock, lacking houses, villages, or social organization. Despising fish, they subsist on game and roots. Numbering about two hundred souls, they now exist in two wandering bands in the Babine and Upper Skeena River agency, Hoqueltet division, British Columbia.— Ed.

<sup>145</sup> The Montagnais are a branch of the great Athapaskan (or Déné) stock of

of Athabasca, also the great lake of this name.<sup>146</sup> The elk is very common, and the reindeer are found in large bands; the chase of the latter is both easy and singular. They regularly bend their course northward in autumn, and return towards the south in the spring. The Indians know their usual crossing-places over the lakes and rivers — and when the herd (often many hundreds in number) are in the water, and approach the opposite shore, the huntsmen leave their concealment, jump into their light canoes, and yell with all their strength to make them return to the centre; there they harass them, continually driving them from the shore, until the poor animals become exhausted; then begins the work of carnage; they are killed without difficulty by daggers and darts, and it rarely happens that one effects his escape. They cover their huts and dress themselves with the skins of the reindeer. Lakes and marshes being so numerous in this country, swans, geese, bustards, and ducks of various species, come hither in thousands during the spring and autumn. The savages travel over these marshy places in *Rackets* in quest of eggs, on which they mostly subsist during this season. Often squares of [194] several acres are found covered with nests. White fish, carp, trout, and unknown fish, abound in all these lakes and rivers.

Two missionaries, a Father of the order of Oblats of northern Indians. By some authorities they are identified with the Chippewyan; others consider them the western branch of the Chippewyan tribe — De Smet uses the term in the first sense. The Chippewyan still rove in their ancient habitat on Athabasca lake and river. The majority of the tribe has been christianized by Catholic missionaries.— Ed.

<sup>146</sup> Lake Athabasca, in the northern portion of the territory of that name, is the outlet of Athabasca River, and extends 190 miles in length and from five to fifty-five in width. It discharges by Slave River into Great Slave Lake, thence through the Mackenzie into the Arctic Ocean. Fort Chippewyan, upon the shore of Lake Athabasca, was one of the earliest trading posts erected by the English in the Northwest. Thence Sir Alexander Mackenzie made his famous explorations (1789-93).— Ed.

Marseilles and a Canadian priest, are on the way, with the intention of penetrating into the interior of the country. The reception given to Mr. Thibault last summer by the Montagnees, leaves little doubt of the happy results of this praiseworthy and holy enterprise.<sup>147</sup> On the banks of the Jasper, we met an old Iroquois called Louis Kwaragkwante, or the travelling sun, accompanied by his family, thirty-six in number. He has been forty years absent from his country, during which he has never seen a priest — has dwelt in the forest of Athabasca on Peace river and subsisted by hunting and fishing. The good old man was overwhelmed with joy, and the children experienced a similar feeling with their father. I will give you the old man's words in English, on learning that I was a priest: "How glad I am to have come here, for I have not seen a priest for many years. To-day I

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<sup>147</sup> The Oblate monk was Alexandre Antoine Taché, later archbishop of St. Boniface on the Red River, and the priest Father L. Lafleche. Father Thibault had visited all the Athabaskan district in the summer of 1844, preparing the way for permanent mission stations. Reporting to Bishop Provencher at Winnipeg, the latter sent the two missionaries to found a central station at Ile à la Crosse (largely frequented by Crees), whence stations were later established at Cariboo Lake and Lake Athabasca.

Father Lafleche came to the Red River country in 1844, remaining at Ile à la Crosse until 1849, when infirmities led him to retire. Elected coadjutor for Bishop Provencher, he declined the responsibility, but served as vicar general until 1856.

Taché was Canadian born (1823); educated at Montreal, he joined the Oblate order, and (1845) volunteered for mission service on the frontier. Arrived at Red River, he was ordained priest, and sent (July, 1846) to found the mission at Ile à la Crosse, whence he made journeys to the distant tribes of the Northwest. Elected coadjutor bishop in 1849, he visited Europe, being two years later consecrated in France. Returning to Canada, he went back to his mission, whence he was summoned to Winnipeg by the death of Bishop Provencher (1853). Taché was an important figure in the Canadian Northwest, being profoundly interested for the material and spiritual welfare of the Indians and half-breeds. He interceded with the Dominion government for the latter's grievances in 1869, and after the Riel rebellion was useful in restoring harmony. Raised to an archbishopric in 1871, he ably administered his diocese until his death in 1894.

See his own account of his early missionary experiences in *Vingt Années de Missions dans le Nord-Ouest de l'Amérique*.—ED.

behold a priest, as I did in my own country — my heart rejoices — wherever you go I shall follow you with my children — all will hear the word of prayer — all will have the happiness [195] to receive baptism. — Therefore my heart rejoices and is happy." The little Iroquois camp immediately set out to follow me to Fort Jasper. Most of them know their prayers in Iroquois. I remained fifteen days at the Fort, instructing them in the duties of religion — after Mass, on Sunday, all were regenerated in the waters of baptism, and seven marriages renewed and blessed. The number of baptized amounted to forty-four; among whom was the lady of Mr. Frazer, (Superintendent of the Fort), and four of his children and two servants.<sup>148</sup>

I have the honor to be, with the most profound respect and high regard, Monseigneur, your very humble and obedient servant in Jesus Christ,

*P. J. De Smet, S. J.*

## No. XV

### A. M. D. G.

Foot of the Great Glaciere, at the Source  
of the Athabasca, May 6th, 1846.

MONSEIGNEUR — Provisions becoming scarce at the Fort, at the moment when we had with us a considerable number of Iroquois from the surrounding country, who were re-

<sup>148</sup> Paul, son of Simon Fraser the explorer (for whom see Farnham's *Travels*, ante, p. 43, note 52), was born in Glengarry, Ontario, in 1799. He entered the Hudson's Bay Company as early as 1827, or before, and in the following year was chief clerk in charge at Fort Vermillion, when Sir George Simpson passed that way. In 1833 he was a senior clerk at Fort McLeod, giving his principal attention to New Caledonia where he was a chief trader before 1844. He built Fort Umpqua in Oregon, and was stationed there for some time. In 1850 he resigned from the Northern department and was sent to Fort Kamloops, where not long afterwards he was killed by the fall of a tree.— ED.



solved to remain until my departure, in order to assist at the instructions, we should have found ourselves in an embarrassing situation had not Mr. Frazer come to our relief, by proposing that we should leave the Fort and accompany himself and family to the Lake of Islands, where we could subsist partly on fish.<sup>149</sup> As the distance was not great, we accepted this invitation, and set out to the number of fifty-four persons, and twenty dogs. I count the latter, because we were as much obliged to provide for them, as for ourselves. A little note of the game killed by our hunters during the twenty-six days of [197] our abode at this place, will perhaps afford you some interest; at least, it will make you acquainted with the animals of the country, and prove that the mountaineers of Athabasca are blessed with good appetites. Animals killed — twelve moose deer, two reindeer, thirty large mountain sheep or big horn, two porcupines, two hundred and ten hares, one beaver, two muskrats, twenty-four bustards, one hundred and fifteen ducks, twenty-one pheasants, one snipe, one eagle, one owl; add to this from thirty to fifty fine white fish every day and twenty trout, and then judge whether or not our people had reason to complain; yet we heard them constantly saying; "How hard living is here? The country is miserably poor — we are obliged to fast."

As the time approached at which I was to leave my new children in Christ, they earnestly begged leave to honor me, before my departure, with a little ceremony to prove their attachment, and that their children might always remember him who had first put them in the way of life. Each one discharged his musket in the direction of the highest mountain, a large rock jutting out in

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<sup>149</sup> There is an Island Lake on the Sturgeon River chain, not far from Lake Ann, but De Smet's topography is too indefinite to insure identification.— ED.

the form of a sugar loaf, and with three loud hurrahs gave it my name. [198] This mountain is more than 14,000 feet high, and is covered with perpetual snow.

On the 25th April, I bade farewell to my kind friend Mr. Frazer, and his amiable children, who had treated me with every mark of attention and kindness.

All the men in the camp insisted on honoring me with an escort, and accompanied me a distance of ten miles. Here we separated, each one affectionately pressed my hand — mutual good wishes were exchanged — tears flowed on both sides — and I was left with my companions in one of those wild ravines where nothing meets the eye, but ranges of gloomy mountains rising on all sides, like so many impassable barriers.

Upper Athabasca is, unquestionably, the most elevated part of North America. All its mountains are prodigious, and their rocky and snow-capt summits seem to lose themselves in the clouds. At this season, immense masses of snow often become loosened and roll down the mountains' sides with a terrific noise, that resounds throughout these quiet solitudes like distant thunder — so irresistible is the velocity of their descent, that they frequently carry with them enormous fragments of rock, and force a [199] passage through the dense forests which cover the base of the mountain. At each hour, the noise of ten avalanches descending at once, breaks upon the ear; on every side we see them precipitated with a frightful rapidity.

From these mountains, the majestic river of the north, the upper branch of the Saskatchewan, the two great forks of the McKenzie, the Athabasca and Peace rivers, the Columbia, and Frazer at the west, derive the greater part of their waters.

In the neighborhood of the Miette river, we fell in with one of those poor families of Porteurs or "Itoaten," of

New Caledonia, of whom I spoke to you in a former letter; they saw us from the summit of the mountain that overlooks the valley through which we were passing, and perceiving we were whites, hastened down to meet us. They appeared overjoyed at seeing us, particularly when they discovered that I was a Black-gown; they crowded around me, and begged me to baptize them with an earnestness that affected me to tears, though I was able to grant this favor to only two of their smallest children, the others required instruction, but there was no interpreter. I exhorted them to return soon to their own country, where they [200] would find a Black-gown (Father Nobili) who would instruct them. They made the sign of the cross, recited some prayers in their own language, and sang several hymns with great apparent devotion. The condition of these people seemed very wretched; they had no clothes but a few rags and some pieces of skins, and yet, notwithstanding their extreme poverty, they laid at my feet the mountain sheep they had just killed.

The history of a poor young woman, one of their number, deserves to be recorded, as it affords a lively picture of the dangers and afflictions to which these unfortunate people are often exposed. When she was about fifteen years of age, her father, mother, and brothers, together with another family of her nation, were surprised in the wood by a party of Assiniboine warriors, and massacred without mercy. At the time of this horrid scene, the young girl was in another part of the forest with her two sisters, both younger than herself; they succeeded in concealing themselves, and thus escaped falling into the hands of the assassins. The hapless orphan wandered about the desert for two years, without meeting any human being, subsisting on roots, wild fruits, and porcupines.

[201] In winter she sheltered herself in the abandoned den of a bear. The sisters left her at the end of the first year, since which they have never been heard of. At length, after three years, she was fortunately found by a good Canadian, who took her home, provided her with comfortable food and clothing, and six months after restored her to her tribe.

We resumed our journey the following day, and arrived about nightfall on the banks of the Athabaska, at the spot called the "Great Crossing." Here we deviated from the course of that river, and entered the valley de la Fourche du Trou.<sup>150</sup>

As we approached the highlands the snow became much deeper. On the 1st of May, we reached the great Bature, which has all the appearance of a lake just drained of its waters. Here we pitched our tent to await the arrival of the people from Columbia, who always pass by this route on the way to Canada and York Factory. Not far from the place of our encampment, we found a new object of surprise and admiration. An immense mountain of pure ice, 1,500 feet high, enclosed between two enormous rocks. So great is the transparency of this beautiful ice, that we can easily distinguish [202] objects in it to the depth of more than six feet. One would say, by its appearance, that in some sudden and extraordinary swell of the river, immense icebergs had been forced between these rocks, and had there piled themselves on one another, so as to form this magnificent glacier. What gives some color of probability to this conjecture is, that on the other side of the glacier, there is a large lake of

<sup>150</sup> La Fourche du Trou (Fork of the Hole), better known as Whirlpool River, is that branch of the Athabaska that descends from the Committee's Punch Bowl on the summit of Athabasca Pass. The first appellation is given because of a peculiar rock formation by which it enters the other branch of the Athabaska through a rocky channel or hole. See our volume vi, p. 353.—ED.

considerable elevation. From the base of this gigantic iceberg, the river Trou takes its rise.

The people of Columbia have just arrived. I must therefore take this present opportunity, the only one I shall have for a long time, of sending you my letters, and before closing this, permit me again to recommend myself and all my missions to your holy sacrifices and fervent prayers.<sup>151</sup>

Meantime, I have the honor to be, with the most sincere respect and esteem, Monseigneur, your very humble and obedient servant in Jesus Christ,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

No. XVI

A. M. D. G.

Boat Encampment on the Columbia, }  
May 10th, 1846. }

VERY REV. AND DEAR FATHER PROVINCIAL: — By my last letter to the distinguished Prelate of New-York, in which I gave my different missionary excursions during 1845-46 among several tribes of the Rocky Mountains, you have learned that I had arrived at the base of the Great Glacier, the source of the river *du Trou*, which is a tributary of the Athabaska, or Elk river. I will now give to your reverence the continuation of my arduous and difficult journey across the main chain of the Rocky Mountains, and down the Columbia, on my return to my dear brethren in Oregon.

Towards the evening of the 6th of May, we discovered, at the distance of about three miles, the approach of two

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<sup>151</sup> By reference to Letter iii, *ante*, pp. 170-172, it will be seen that all the succeeding letters to this point were enclosed with that accompanying them, and forwarded by the usual Columbia brigade, which De Smet met at this point of his journey.—ED.

men in snow shoes, who soon joined us. They proved to be the forerunners [204] of the English Company which, in the spring of each year, go from Fort Vancouver to York Factory, situated at the mouth of the river Nelson, near the fifty-eighth degree north latitude.<sup>152</sup> In the morning my little train was early ready; we proceeded, and after a march of eight miles we fell in with the gentlemen of the Hudson Bay Company. The time of our reunion was short, but interesting and joyful. The great melting of the snow had already begun, and we were obliged to be on the alert to cross in due time, the now swelling rapids and rivers. The news between travellers, who meet in the mountains is quickly conveyed to one another. The leaders of the company were my old friends, Mr. Ermatinger, of the Honorable Hudson Bay Company,<sup>153</sup> and two distinguished officers of the English army, Captains Ward and Vavas seur, whom I had the honor of entertaining last year at the Great Kalispel lake. Capt. Ward is the gentleman who had the kindness to take charge of my letters for the States and for Europe.

Fifteen Indians of the Kettle-Fall tribe accompanied him. Many of them had scaled the mountains with one hundred and fifty pounds weight upon their backs. The worthy Capt. [205] Ward spoke many things in praise of them. He admired their honesty and civility, and above all, their sincere piety and great regularity in their religious duties; every morning and evening, they were seen retiring a short distance from the camp, to sing one or two hymns, and join in common prayer. "I hope," added the Captain, "I shall never forget the example, which these poor, but good savages, have given me. During the time that they were with me, I was much struck by their becoming de-

<sup>152</sup> For a brief sketch of York Factory see our volume vi, p. 377, note 191.—ED.

<sup>153</sup> For Francis Ermatinger see our volume xxvii, p. 235, note 108.—ED.



portment, and I have never seen more sincere piety than they exhibited."

The gentlemen of the English Company were now at the end of their chief difficulties and troubles. They gladly threw away their snow shoes to take horses for four days; at Fort Jasper they were to enter skiffs, to go to Fort Assiniboine, on the river Athabasca. For myself, I had to try the snow shoes for the first time in my life; by means of them, I had to ascend those frightful ramparts, the barriers of snow, which separate the Atlantic world from the Pacific Ocean. I have, in my previous letters, already told you, that this is probably the most elevated point of the Rocky Mountains, where five great rivers derive their sources, [206] viz.: the north-branch of the Sascatchewan, flowing into Lake Winnipeg, the Athabasca and Peace rivers, uniting and flowing into Great Slave Lake, which is discharged into the Northern Ocean, by the Mackenzie, the most solitary of rivers. From the bosom of these mountains the Columbia and Frazer rivers derive water from a thousand fountains and streams.

We had now seventy miles to travel in snow shoes, in order to reach the boat encampment on the banks of the Columbia. We proposed to accomplish this in two days and a half. The most worthy and excellent Messrs. Rowan and Harriot, whose kindness at the Rocky Mountain House and Fort Augustus I shall ever acknowledge, were of opinion, that it was absolutely impossible for me to accomplish the journey, on account of my heavy mould, and they wished to dissuade me from attempting it. However, I thought I could remedy the inconvenience of my surplus stock, by a vigorous fast of thirty days, which I cheerfully underwent. I found myself much lighter indeed, and started off somewhat encouraged, over snow sixteen feet deep. We went in single file — alternately

ascending and descending — sometimes across plains piled up with avalanches — sometimes [207] over lakes and rapids buried deeply under the snow — now, on the side of a deep mountain — then across a forest of cypress trees, of which we could only see the tops. I cannot tell you the number of my sunsets. I continually found myself embarrassed by my snow shoes, or entangled in some branch of a tree. When falling, I spread my arms before me, as one naturally would do, to break the violence of the fall; and upon deep snow the danger is not great, — though I was often half buried, when I required the assistance of my companions, which was always tendered with great kindness and good humor.

We made thirty miles the first day, and then made preparations to encamp. Some pine trees were cut down and stripped of their branches, and these being laid on the snow, furnished us with a bed, whilst a fire was lighted on a floor of green logs. To sleep thus — under the beautiful canopy of the starry heavens — in the midst of lofty and steep mountains — among sweet murmuring rills and roaring torrents — may appear strange to you, and to all lovers of rooms, rendered comfortable by stoves and feathers; but you may think differently after having come and breathed the pure air of the [208] mountains, where in return, coughs and colds are unknown. Come and make the trial, and you will say that it is easy to forget the fatigues of a long march, and find contentment and joy even upon the spread branches of pines, on which, after the Indian fashion, we extended ourselves and slept, wrapped up in buffalo robes.

The next morning we commenced the descent of what is called the Great Western Slope. This took us five hours. The whole slope is covered with gigantic cedars, and with pine trees of different species. Wo to the man,

who happens to have a heavy body, or to make a false step. I say this from experience; for many times I found myself twenty or thirty feet from the point of my departure — happy indeed if, in the fall, I did not violently strike my head against the trunk of some great tree.

At the foot of the mountain an obstacle of a new kind presented itself. All the barriers of snow, the innumerable banks, which had stopped the water of the streams, lakes, and torrents, were broken up during the night, and swelled considerably the Great Portage river.<sup>154</sup> It meanders so remarkably in this straight valley, down which we travelled for a day and a half, [209] that we were compelled to cross the said river not less than forty times, with the water frequently up to our shoulders. So great is its impetuosity, that we were obliged mutually to support ourselves, to prevent being carried away by the current. We marched in our wet clothes during the rest of our sad route. The long soaking, joined to my great fatigue, swelled my limbs. All the nails of my feet came off, and the blood stained my moccasins or Indian shoes. Four times I found my strength gone, and I should certainly have perished in that frightful region, if the courage and strength of my companions had not roused and aided me in my distress.

We saw May-poles all along the old encampments of the Portage. Each traveller who passes there for the first time, selects his own. A young Canadian, with much kindness, dedicated one to me, which was at least one hundred and twenty feet in height, and which reared its

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<sup>154</sup> This river has various names, by some called Portage, and by others Little Canoe, since it enters the Columbia at its great northern bend, just where the Canoe River coming from the north also joins it. This westward-flowing mountain torrent — first discovered by David Thompson in 1810-11 — issues from a small lake at the summit of the pass, within a few rods of the Committee's Punch Bowl.— ED.

lofty head above all the neighboring trees. Did I deserve it? He stripped it of all its branches, only leaving at the top a little crown; at the bottom my name and the date of the transit were written. Moose, reindeer, and mountain goats are frequently found in this region.

[210] We next passed through a thick and mountainous forest, where hoary pines lay prostrate by thousands — and where many a giant tree, in its full vigor, had been levelled to the ground by the raging tempest. On issuing from the forest, an extensive marsh presented itself, through which we had to plod, up to the knees in mud and water; this trouble was trifling compared to the past, and we were still more encouraged at the sight of a beautiful and verdant plain, where four reindeer were seen carousing, bouncing, and jumping in the midst of plenty. No doubt they, as well as ourselves, had issued forth from the snowy and icy cliffs, and felt light-hearted and joyful at the delightful prospect of mountain and plain at this season of the year. On approaching, a dozen guns were at once levelled against the innocent and timid creatures. I was pleased to observe, by the wonderful rapidity with which they used their legs, that no one had injured their noble and beautiful frames.

Towards the middle of the day we arrived at the Boat Encampment, on the bank of the Columbia, at the mouth of the Portage river.<sup>155</sup> Those who have passed the Rocky Mountains at fifty three degrees of north latitude, during [211] the great melting of the snows, know whether or not we merit the title of good travellers. It required all my strength to accomplish it, and I confess that I would not dare undertake it again.

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<sup>155</sup> So named from Thompson's camp, where he stopped to build canoes to descend the Columbia. It became a noted site on the upper Columbia, where horses or snow-shoes were exchanged for canoes or vice versa.— ED.

After so many labors and dangers, we deserved a repast. Happily, we found at the encampment all the ingredients that were necessary for a feast — a bag of flour, a large ham, part of a reindeer, cheese, sugar, and tea in abundance, which the gentlemen of the English Company had charitably left behind. While some were employed refitting the barge, others prepared the dinner; and in about an hour we found ourselves snugly seated and stretched out around the kettles and roasts, laughing and joking about the summersets on the mountains, and the accidents on the Portage. I need not tell you, that they described me as the most clumsy and awkward traveller in the band.

Three beautiful rivers unite at this place: the Columbia, coming from the south-east — the Portage river, from the north-east, and the Canoe river from the north-west. We were surrounded by a great number of magnificent mountains, covered with perpetual snow, and rising from twelve to sixteen thousand feet [212] above the level of the ocean. The Hooker and the Brown are the highest, the latter measuring sixteen thousand feet.<sup>156</sup>

Very Rev. and dear Father Provincial, your humble brother in Jesus Christ,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

No. XVII

A. M. D. G.

St. Paul's Station, near Colville, }  
May 29th, 1846. }

VERY REV. AND DEAR FATHER PROVINCIAL — The Columbia at the Boat Encampment is 3,600 feet above the level

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<sup>156</sup> For the two peaks here mentioned, see Farnham's *Travels*, ante, pp. 29, 30, notes 22 23.— ED.

of the sea. Having finished our meal, we launched the barge and rapidly descended the river, which was now swollen many feet above its usual level. Did not more serious avocations call him away, an admirer of Nature would willingly linger in a region like this. The volcanic and basaltic islands — the range of picturesque mountains, whose bases came to bathe in the river, whilst their summits seemed to be struggling, in the giant efforts of the avalanche, to throw off the winding-sheet of winter, in order to give place to the new and beautiful verdure of the month of May, with its smiling and varied flowers — the thousand fountains which we could at one view behold, [214] leaping out with soothing music from the shelves of perpendicular rocks bordering the river — all lent their aid to increase the beauty of the scenery of Nature, which, in this region of the Columbia, seems to have put forth all her energy to display her grandeur and magnificence.

After some hours of descent we came to Martin's rapid, where a Canadian, so called, together with his son, found a watery grave. Its roar is deafening, and the agitation of the water resembles that of a raging sea-storm. The whole bed of the river is here strewed with immense fragments of rocks. Guided by an expert Iroquois pilot, and aided with ten oars, the boat darted over its boisterous surface, dancing-like and leaping from wave to wave, with the rapidity of lightning.

At sunset we were at the Dalle of the Dead. (*Dalle* is an old French word, meaning a trough, and the name is given by the Canadian voyageurs to all contracted running waters, hemmed in by walls of rocks.) Here, in 1838, twelve unfortunate travellers were buried in the river.<sup>157</sup> The waters are compressed between a range

<sup>157</sup> The Dalles of the Dead was an especially dangerous place on the upper



of perpendicular rocks, presenting innumerable crags, fissures and cliffs, through which the Columbia leaps with irresistible impetuosity, [215] forming, as it dashes along, frightful whirlpools, where every passing object is swallowed and disappears. By means of two long ropes we dropped down our boat through the Dalle, and encamped for the night at its outlet.

On the 11th we continued our route at early dawn — the mountain scenery was hidden from our view wrapped up in dense mist and fog, which were seen ascending in dense pillars, adding to the forming clouds above, till the whole sky was overcast. Occasionally, as if to break upon the unusual monotony, would a fallow or reindeer be observed on the margin of the stream, or peeping with uplifted ears from a thicket, as the strange sound of oars, or the Canadian song, came stealing louder and louder upon them in their quiet abode: — off they bounded, affrighted at the sight of men, so hateful, it appears, to the wild and timid creatures of the forest. In the evening we encamped at the entrance of the Upper Lake.

This beautiful sheet of crystalline water, whilst the rising sun was tinting the tops of a thousand hills around, came most refreshing to the eye. It is about thirty miles long, by four or five wide. Its borders are embellished by overhanging precipices and majestic peaks, [216] which, rearing their white heads above the clouds, look down like venerable monarchs of the desert upon the great forests of pines and cedar surrounding the lake. The two highest peaks are called St. Peter and St. Paul.

Twenty Indian families, belonging to the station of St. Peter, were found encamped on the borders of the lake.

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Columbia. Probably they took their name from the sad fate of a party who turned back from Boat Encampment in 1817. See Ross Cox, *Adventures on the Columbia River* (New York, 1832), p. 245.—ED.

I gladly accepted their invitation to visit them. It was the meeting of a father with his children, after ten months of absence and dangers. I dare say the joy was mutually sincere. The greater part of the tribe had been converted during the past year, at Kettle Falls. These families were absent at that time. I passed, therefore, several days among them, to instruct them in the duties and practices of religion. They then received baptism, with all the marks of sincere piety and gratitude. Gregory, the name of their chief, who had not ceased to exhort his people by word and example, had the happiness to receive baptism in 1838, from the hands of the Rev. Mr., now Archbishop, Blanchet. The worthy and respectable chief was now at the height of his joy, in seeing at last all his children brought under the standard of Jesus Christ. The tribe of these lake Indians are a part of the Kettle [217] Fall nation. They are very poor, and subsist principally on fish and wild roots. As soon as we shall have more means at our disposal, we will supply them with implements of husbandry and with various seeds and roots, which I have no doubt, will thrive well in their country; this will be a great assistance to these destitute people. The second lake is about six miles distant from the first. It is of about the same length, but less wide. We passed under a perpendicular rock, where we beheld an innumerable number of arrows sticking out of the fissures. The Indians, when they ascend the lake, have a custom of lodging each an arrow into these crevices. The origin and cause of the custom is unknown to me.<sup>158</sup>

The mouth of the river McGilvray or Flat-Bow, is near the outlet of the Lower Lakes. It presents a beautiful

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<sup>158</sup> Alexander Ross in his *Fur Hunters*, ii, pp. 165-175, speaks of paintings in red ochre upon a rock on Lower Arrow Lake, against which the passing Indians shot their arrows in defiance of the tribes beyond. By examining these arrows,

situation for the establishment of a future Reduction or Mission, and I have already marked out a site for the construction of a church. About twenty miles lower, we passed the Flat-Head or Clark's river, which contributes largely to the Columbia. These two beautiful rivers derive a great portion of their waters from the same chain of the Rocky Mountains, from which a great number of the [218] forks of the south branch of the Saskatchewan and of the Missouri are supplied. For a distance of about thirty miles from their junction with the Columbia, are they obstructed by insurmountable falls and rapids. Among the many lakes connected with the Flat-Head river, three are very conspicuous, and measure from thirty to forty miles in length, and from four to six in width. The Flat-Head lake receives a broad and beautiful stream, extending upwards of a hundred miles in a north-western direction, through a most delightful valley, and is supplied by considerable torrents, coming from a great cluster of mountains, connected immediately with the main chain, in which a great number of lakes lie imbedded. Clark's fork passed through Lake Kalispel.<sup>159</sup> Lake Roothaan is situated in the Pend-d'oreille and Flat-Bow mountains, and discharges itself by the Black-gown river into the Clark, twenty miles below Kalispel Lake.<sup>160</sup> The St. Mary's,

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the natives could tell what tribes have lately passed. Doubtless from this custom the lakes have received their name. They are wide spreads of the river, beautifully located, amid high cliffs and peaks. Upper Arrow Lake is about thirty-three miles long and three broad; the Lower is more tortuous, and slightly longer and narrower. The distance between them is more nearly sixteen than six miles.—ED.

<sup>159</sup> For these two lakes see our volume xxvii, pp. 339, 359, notes 175, 181, respectively.—ED.

<sup>160</sup> Roothaan was at that time father general of the Jesuit order; see our volume xxvii, p. 155, note 25 (De Smet). The lake is now known as Priest Lake, and Blackrobe River as Priest River, occupying a forest reserve of that name in northwestern Idaho, with a like strip in northeastern Washington.—ED.

or Bitter-root river, from the south-east, is the greatest tributary of Clark's fork, and the chief residence of the Flat-Heads. All these waters contain an abundance of fish, especially trout. The geography of the head of Clark's Fork, is little known, as appears from the maps, the south-east [219] branch or the Saint Mary's river being only a small tributary compared to the main stream, coming from the north-west, and passing through the great Flat-Head lake.

Our barge was in great danger in the Dalle, some miles above Colville.<sup>161</sup> I had left it, to go on foot, to avoid the dangerous passage. The young boatman, notwithstanding my remonstrances, thought they could pass in safety. A whirlpool suddenly arrested their course, and threatened to bury them beneath its angry waters. Their redoubled efforts proved ineffectual — I saw them borne on with an irresistible force to the engulfing centre — the bow of the boat descended already into the abyss and filled! I was on my knees upon the rock which overhung this frightful spectacle, surrounded by several Indians — we implored the aid of Heaven in favor of our poor comrades — they seemed to be evidently lost — when the whirlpool filled, and threw them from its bosom, as it reluctantly yielded up the prey which it had so tenaciously held. We all gave heartfelt thanks to Almighty God for having delivered them from a danger so imminent.

From the outlet of the Lower Lake of the Columbia to Fort Colville, the aspect of the [220] country is highly picturesque and interesting. The whole section, on both sides of the river, is well supplied with rivulets and streams.

<sup>161</sup> This portion of the river is fifteen miles south of the international boundary line, and twenty-six above Kettle Falls. It is known as the Little Dalles, the cañon being deep and narrow, without bottom lands. See Thomas W. Symons, *Report of an Examination of the Upper Columbia River* (Washington, 1882), pp. 11-13.— Ed.

The soil is rather light, but it affords fine grazing; the mountains are not high — the forests are open — the bottom lands present here and there beautiful groves — the surface of the soil yields an abundant and luxuriant grass.

Towards the end of the month of May I arrived at Fort Colville. I found the nation of Shuyelphi or Kettle Fall already baptized by the Rev. Father Hoecken, who had continued to instruct them after my departure in the month of August of last year. They had built, to my great surprise, a small frame church, so much the more beautiful and agreeable to my eyes, as being their first attempt at architecture, and the exclusive work of the Indians. With a laudable pride they conducted me, as in triumph, to the humble and new temple of the Lord, and in favor of that good people, and for their perseverance in the faith, I there offered the august Sacrifice of the Altar.

The arrival of the good Father Nobili at Colville filled us with great joy and consolation. He had made missionary excursions over the greatest portion of New Caledonia. Everywhere [221] the Indian tribes received him with open arms, and took great care to bring their little children to be baptized. I add to this an extract from his letter, which will give you an outline of his journey and the number of baptisms he performed. Having made a retreat of eight days in the Reduction of St. Ignatius, and after a month of repose and preparation for a second expedition, he returned with renewed zeal and fervor to his dear Caledonians, accompanied by several laborers, and supplied with a dozen horses, loaded with implements of agriculture and carpentry.

As a token of my sincere gratitude, and to let you know that we have friends and benefactors in Oregon, I must here state to your Reverence, that Father Nobili and my-

self were most hospitably entertained during our stay at Fort Colville. The kindness of the Honorable Mr. Lewes and family I shall never forget.<sup>162</sup> The attention shown Father Nobili, in the trading posts of New Caledonia is beyond all praise. Truly and deservedly has Commodore Wilkes stated,<sup>163</sup> "That the liberality and hospitality of all the gentlemen of the Honorable Hudson Bay Company are proverbial." Indeed, we experience this and participate of it on all occasions.

[222] I remain, with profound respect and esteem, Very Rev. and dear Father, your humble and obedient servant,

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

## NO. XVIII

A. M. D. G.

### EXTRACT FROM FATHER NOBILI'S LETTER

Fort Colville, June 1st, 1846.

REV. FATHER,—While I remained at Fort Vancouver, I baptized upwards of sixty persons, during a dangerous sickness which raged in the country. The majority of those who received baptism, died with all the marks of sincere conversion. On the 27th of July, I baptized nine children at Fort Okinagane<sup>164</sup> — the children of the chief of the Sioushwaps were of the number. He appeared full

<sup>162</sup> Lewes (according to H. H. Bancroft, John Lee; according to Father Morice, Thomas) was an old North West Company man, who was now chief factor in the Hudson's Bay Company. He had been stationed both on Mackenzie River and in New Caledonia, and came to Colville about 1845. Offered chief command of the latter district the following year, he declined because of ill-health. Soon afterwards resigning, he retired to Australia, but ultimately returned and settled in the Red River country.—ED.

<sup>163</sup> For Commodore Wilkes see Farnham's *Travels*, ante, p. 72, note 88.—ED.

<sup>164</sup> For Fort Okanagan see our volume vi, p. 260, note 71.—ED.



of joy at seeing a *Black-gown* direct his course towards their country. On the 29th I left Okinagane, and followed the company. Every night I prayed with the whites and Indians. On the road three old men came to me, and earnestly begged me to "*take pity on them, and prepare them for heaven!*" Having instructed them in the duties and principles of religion, and the necessity of baptism, I administered to them, and to forty-six [224] children of the same tribe, what seemed to be the height of their desires, the holy Sacrament of regeneration.

On the 11th of August, a tribe of Indians, residing about the Upper Lake on Thompson's River, came to meet me.<sup>165</sup> They exhibited towards me all the marks of sincere and filial attachment. They followed me several days to hear my instructions, and *only departed* after having exacted a promise that I would return in the course of the following autumn or winter, and make known to them the glad tidings of salvation.

At the Fort of the Sioushwaps, I received a visit from all the chiefs, who congratulated me on my happy arrival amongst them.<sup>166</sup> They raised a great cabin to serve as a church, and as a place to teach them during my stay. I baptized twelve of their children. I was obliged, when the Salmon fishing commenced, to separate for some months from these dear Indians, and continue my route to New Caledonia.

I arrived at Fort Alexandria on the 25th.<sup>167</sup> All the tribes I met manifested towards me the same emotions

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<sup>165</sup> De Smet proceeded with his Indian guides up the valley of Okanagan River and lake, crossed to the upper waters of the South Thompson, and came out on Shuswap Lake, a large irregularly-formed body of water, a gathering place for the tribes of that stock. See our volume vii, p. 159, notes 51, 52.—ED.

<sup>166</sup> "Fort of the Sioushwaps" is Fort Kamloops, for which see our volume vii, p. 199, note 64.—ED.

<sup>167</sup> See Farnham's *Travels*, ante, p. 44, note 53.—ED.

of joy and friendship. To my surprise I found at the Fort a frame church. I returned in the fall and remained there a month, [225] engaged in all the exercises of our holy ministry. The Canadians performed their religious duties — I joined several in marriage, and administered to many the Holy Communion. Twenty-four children and forty-seven adults received baptism.

On the 2d of September, I ascended the river Frazer, and after a dangerous trip, arrived, on the 12th, at Fort George,<sup>168</sup> where the same joy and affection on the part of the Indians attended me. Fifty Indians had come down from the Rocky Mountains, and patiently awaited my arrival for nineteen days, in order to have the consolation of witnessing the ceremony of baptism. I baptized twelve of their children, and twenty-seven others, of whom six were adults advanced in age. I performed there the ceremonies of the planting of the Cross.

On the 14th, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, I ascended the river Nesqually, and on the 24th, arrived at the Fort of Lake Stuart.<sup>169</sup> I spent eleven days in giving instructions to the Indians, and had the happiness of abolishing the custom of burning the dead, and that of inflicting torments upon the bodies of the surviving wives or husbands. They solemnly renounced all their juggling and idolatries. [226] Their great medicine-hall, where they used to practise their superstitious rites, was changed into a church. It was blessed and

<sup>168</sup> Fort George, situated at the confluence of the Nechaco with the Fraser, was built by Simon Fraser in the autumn of 1807, and named in honor of the reigning English monarch. Hugh Faries was the first officer in charge. The fort stood in the midst of a hunting country, and was noted for its fine furs. A Hudson's Bay Company post is still maintained at this place.— ED.

<sup>169</sup> Father de Smet ascended first the Nechaco to the embouchment of Stuart River, then up that stream — whose native name is Nakasley or Na'kaztle — to Stuart Lake, where is situated the capital of New Caledonia, Fort St. James. See Farnham's *Travels*, ante, p. 58, note 77.— ED.

dedicated to God under the patronage of St. Francis Xavier.<sup>170</sup> The planting of the Cross was solemnly performed with all the ceremonies proper to such occasions. Sixteen children and five old men received baptism.

The 24th Oct., I visited the village of the Chilcotins.<sup>171</sup> This mission lasted twelve days, during which time I baptized eighteen children and twenty-four adults, and performed eight marriages. I blessed here the first cemetery, and buried, with all the ceremonies of the ritual, an Indian woman, the first converted to Christianity. I next visited two other villages of the same tribe — in the first I baptized twenty persons, of whom three were adults. In the second, two chiefs with thirty of their nation received baptism, and two were united in matrimony. Polygamy prevailed everywhere, and everywhere I succeeded in abolishing it. In a neighboring tribe I baptized fifty-seven persons, of whom thirty-one were adults. I also celebrated nine marriages.

After my return to the Sioushwaps, I baptized forty-one persons, of whom eleven were adults. I visited five more villages among the [227] neighboring tribes, amongst whom I baptized about two hundred persons. I performed

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<sup>170</sup> The mission at Fort St. James received no further visit after that of Father de Smet's successor, Father Nobili (1847), for twenty-one years. In 1868 the order of Oblates sent two missionaries thither who were at the fort in the early summer, and soon after founded a permanent mission thereat, of which Father Adrian G. Morice was for many years the head. See his *History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia*, pp. 326-336.—ED.

<sup>171</sup> The Chilcotin are one of the four tribes of Western Déné, occupying the valley of the river bearing their name. They are nearly related to the Carrier in their customs and modes of life; but have always been more turbulent, and difficult to control. The Hudson's Bay Company built a fort among them which was later abandoned because of the untrustworthy character of the native population; see Farnham's *Travels*, ante, p. 58, note 77. In 1864 they attacked the miners of the region, and the consequent punitive expedition cost the Dominion government over \$60,000. They are now on reservations in their valley, being Roman Catholic communicants and gradually becoming civilized.—ED.

the ceremony of the planting of the Cross, in eight different places, and founded four frame churches which were constructed by the savages.

On an average, each village or tribe consists of about two hundred souls.

In the neighborhood of Fort Alexandria	the number of souls amounts to	1255
About Fort George,		343
In the neighborhood of Frazer's Lake,		258
“ “ Stuart's Lake,		211
“ “ McLeod's Lake,		80
“ “ Fort Babine,		1190
“ “ Bear Lake, <sup>172</sup>		801
Total number of souls,		4138

Population on Thompson's river, or on the land of the Sioushwaps or Atnass.<sup>173</sup>

The number of Sioushwaps, so called, is	583
“ of Okinaganes,	685

<sup>172</sup> For the forts upon these lakes and their location, see Farnham's *Travels*, ante, pp. 56, 58, notes 68, 77.

Fort Babine—during the first years called Fort Kilmaurs—was built in 1822 on the north bank of the lake of that name. Pierre C. Pambrum and William Connolly were the first traders in charge. The Babine Indians, so named from the plug of wood worn by the women to enlarge the lower lip, were loyal Hudson's Bay people, and good hunters. There are still three bands of this tribe dwelling near Babine Lake—one known as the Old Fort Babines have a village in the vicinity of the first post, fourteen miles from the foot of the lake, and accessible only by canoes.

The fort on Bear Lake was named Connolly, and established in 1826 for the benefit of the northern Sekanais. The earliest post was built on an island in the lake, and was the most northerly of the interior stations of New Caledonia.—ED.

<sup>173</sup> The Shushwap (Atnahs) proper live on both branches of Thompson River; the Okanagan, on the lake and river of that name. Lake Superior (or the “Upper” Lake) is probably Upper Arrow Lake of the Columbia. The Fountain of Fraser River (not Lake) is an Indian village known as Hulilp, near the site of the modern Lillooet; probably the author intends by this the whole tribe of Lillooets, a western branch of the Shushwap. The Knife Indians are probably the Thompson (or

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Population on the North Branch,	525
“ on Lake Superior,	322
“ at the Fountain of Frazer Lake,	1127
Number of Knife Indians,	<u>1530</u>
Total number of souls,	4772

I remain, reverend Father, yours, &c.,

*J. Nobili, S. J.*

### No. XIX

A. M. D. G.

Fort Walla-Walla, }  
 July 18th, 1846. }

VERY REV. AND DEAR FATHER PROVINCIAL,— I accepted the kind offer of Mr. Lewes, and took my seat in one of the barges of the Hudson Bay Company, on its way to Fort Vancouver. We stopped at Fort Okinagane, where I administered baptism to forty-three persons, chiefly children. Our passage was very pleasant and agreeable. I have little to add to what I have already stated in my preceding letters of last year, respecting our residence at Saint Francis Xavier's, and the other Catholic establishments in the Willamette Valley and vicinity. St. James' Church at Vancouver, St. John's in Oregon City, St. Mary's at the Convent, and St. Francis Xavier's chapel have all been opened for divine service. The new church among the Canadians, and Cathedral, were fast progressing. The number of children in the Sisters' school [229] had 7.

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Similkameen) branch of the Shushwap stock, inhabiting the valley of Similkameen River and ranging thence to the Thompson and Fraser. The six bands of Shushwap here named correspond in part with the divisions given by G. M. Dawson in "The Shuswaps of British Columbia," in *Canadian Royal Society Transactions*, ix, part 2, pp. 3-43.— ED.

greatly increased, and a change for the better already taken place among the little metis girls confided to their care. Sister Loyola, the Superior, appeared delighted with their present conduct. Two Protestant families, among the most respectable in Oregon, Dr. Long and lady and Judge Burnet and family, were received into the bosom of the Catholic Church, in Oregon City.<sup>174</sup> Archbishop Blanchet and companions were anxiously expected; may the Lord speed them, and grant them a happy passage on the boisterous ocean — a route which, it appears, they have selected in order to reach their destined new homes. O, how large is the vineyard! — the Island of Vancouver alone contains upwards of twenty thousand Indians, ready to receive our missionaries — and an extensive field awaits the laborers, among the numerous nations of the north-west coast. The visits paid to these various tribes, by the *Black-gowns*, and the affection and kindness with which they are received by

+ <sup>174</sup> Peter H. Burnett was born in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1807. While still young he moved with his parents to Missouri, where he engaged in mercantile pursuits and began legal studies. Upon the introduction of Senator Linn's bill in Congress providing land for bona fide Oregon settlers, Burnett determined to emigrate thither, and was chosen captain of a large company, which set forth in 1843. Arrived in Oregon, he settled first at Linnville, then at Tualatin Plains, where he took much interest in the provisional government and was a member of its first legislative committee (1844). The following year he was chosen judge of the supreme court, and upon the establishment of territorial government was appointed justice of the United States court. In 1848 he went to California, where in 1850 he was elected first governor of the new state, and later (1857-58) served as justice of the California supreme court. Embarking in the banking business in San Francisco, he won eminence as a financier, dying in his adopted home in 1894. He has related his experiences in *Recollections and Opinions of an Old Pioneer* (New York, 1880). He therein details his conversion to Catholicism, due chiefly to conviction following the reading of controversial works. Going to Oregon City, he was received into the church by Father Devos (June, 1846).

Dr. John E. Long was a native of England, being educated for a physician. Emigrating to the United States in 1833, and to Oregon ten years later, he acted as recorder of the first legislature of the provisional government, but in 1846 was killed by an accident.— E.D.



the Indians, leave little doubt of the ultimate success of their holy enterprise.

In order to return to the upper Missions, I started in the beginning of July, from Fort Vancouver, two days after the brigade of the Hudson Bay Company had left it. An accident [230] by the way, fortunately not attended with more serious consequences, here occurred to me. A powder-horn exploded near me accidentally, scorching me severely, and completely stripping the skin from my nose, cheeks and lips — leaving me to all appearance, after all my travels, a raw-faced mountaineer. I procured an Indian canoe, well-mounted, and soon found myself during a thunder storm, in the great gap of the Cascade Mountains, through which the mighty Columbia winds its way. The sublime and the romantic appear to have made a grand effort for a magnificent display in this spot. On both sides of the stream perpendicular walls of rock rise in majestic boldness — small rills and rivulets, innumerable crystalline streams pursue their way; murmuring down on the steep declivities, they rush and leap from cascade to cascade, after a thousand gambols, adding, at last, their foaming tribute to the turbulent and powerful stream. The imposing mass of waters has here forced its way between a chain of volcanic, towering mountains, advancing headlong with an irresistible impetuosity, over rocky reefs, and prostrate ruins, for a distance of about four miles; forming the dangerous, and indeed the last remarkable obstruction — the [231] great cascades of the Columbia. There is an interesting, and very plausible Indian account of the formation of these far-famed cascades, on which so much has been said and written, so many conjectures regarding earth-slides, sinks, or swells, caused by subterraneous volcanic agents. “Our grandfathers,” said an Indian to me, “remember the

time when the waters passed here quietly, and without obstruction, under a long range of towering and projecting rocks, which, unable to bear their weight any longer, crumbled down, thus stopping up and raising the bed of the river; here it overflowed the great forests of cedar and pine, which are still to be seen above the cascades." Indeed, the traveller beholds with astonishment, a great number of huge trunks of trees, still standing upright in water about twenty feet deep. No person, in my opinion, can form a just idea of the cause that produced these remarkable changes, without admitting the Indian narrative.

My baggage was soon conveyed to the upper end of the portage. The distance from the cascades to the dalles is about forty-five miles, and is without any obstacle. The mountain scenery on both sides of the river, with its [232] clusters of shrubs, cedars and pines, is truly delightful, heightened occasionally by the sight of the snow-capped Mounts Hood and St. Helena. A favorable breeze made us unfurl two blankets for the want of sails, and as we were gliding rapidly up the stream, we observed several islands of volcanic formation, where the Indians deposit their dead on scaffolds, or in little huts made of pieces of split cedar, frequently covered with mats and boards; great care is taken to hinder birds of prey, or the rapacious wolves, with their hyena stomachs and plundering propensities, from breaking in upon the abode of the dead.

The third day we arrived at the great dalles. Indians flock thither from different quarters of the interior, to attend, at this season of the year, to the salmon fisheries. This is their glorious time for rejoicing, gambling, and feasting; the long lent is passed; they have at last assembled in the midst of abundance—all that the eye can see, or the nose smell, is fish, and nothing but fish. Piles of them are lying everywhere on the rocks, the Indian

huts abound with them, and the dogs are dragging and fighting over the offal in all directions. Not less than eight hundred Indians were present on this occasion. [233] One who has seen them five years ago, poor and almost naked, and who beholds them now, discovers with a peculiar feeling of humor and delight, the entire change in their external appearance, a complete metamorphosis, as Ovid would say. Their dresses are of the most grotesque character, regardless alike of their appropriateness to sex or condition of life. A masquerade character, as we understand it, will at least exhibit unity of design; but this Indian masquerade sets all unities at defiance. A stout, swarthy Indian, steps proudly by you, apparently conscious of the dignity conferred on him by his new acquisitions — a roundabout much too small for him, a pair of tights with straps, with an intervening space showing the absence of linen, form his body dress, while an old fashioned lady's night-cap with large frills, and if he be rich enough, a sailor's glazed cap carefully balanced above it, constitute his head dress; a pair, and sometimes half a pair of brogans, complete the ludicrous appearance of this Indian dandy. Some appear parading thro' the camp in the full dress of a wagoner, others in a mixture composed of the sailor's, the wagoner's, and the lawyer's, arranged according to fancy; but the favorite article of ornamental [234] dress appears to be the night-cap with its large frills; some again with only one article of dress. I have seen an old Indian showing off a pair of boots to the best advantage, as they formed the only article of his wardrobe then on his person. Indian squaws are seen attired in long calico gowns, little improved by the copious addition of fish oil, with which the taste or negligence of the present owners besmeared them; occasionally, if they can afford it, to this is superadded a vest, a flannel

or great-coat. The dalles at present, form a kind of masquerading thoroughfare, where emigrants and Indians meet, it appears, for the purpose of affording mutual aid. When the Oregon emigrants arrive here, they are generally in want of provisions, horses, canoes, and guides — these wants the Indians supply, receiving in exchange the old travelling clothes of the doctors, lawyers, farmers, Germans, Frenchmen, Spaniards, &c., that pass through the dalles on their westward route. Hence the motley collection of pants, coats, boots, of every form and size, comforters, caps and hats of every fashion.

Here I overtook Messrs. Lewes and Manson,<sup>175</sup> who kindly offered me a place in one of the barges of the Company, which I gladly accepted — the transportation of their boats and goods [235] had taken up a whole day. From the great dalles to the upper sources of the Columbia, great care and attention are to be had in its navigation, for it presents a constant succession of rapids, falls, cascades, and dalles. Men of great experience, are here employed as pilots, and notwithstanding their skill and precaution,

<sup>175</sup> Donald Manson, born in Scotland in 1800, entered the Hudson's Bay Company at the age of seventeen, and was sent out to York Factory. Three years later, at Winnipeg, he met Dr. McLoughlin and in 1823 accompanied him to the Pacific department. At first assigned to an exploring expedition under charge of Samuel Black, he reached Vancouver January 6, 1825, and aided in completing its works. Two years later he accompanied the expedition that founded Fort Langley, and was afterwards sent to restore the trading post of old Fort George, at the mouth of the Columbia. In 1829 Manson was placed in charge of Fort McLoughlin, on Millbank Sound, and there remained for ten years, after which a well-deserved furlough gave him the opportunity to revisit Scotland. Returning to the Pacific, he was sent (1841) to succeed Samuel Black at Kamloops, and to punish the latter's murderers; the following year a like task was assigned him at Stikeen. In 1844 Manson was placed in command of New Caledonia, with headquarters at Fort St. James, a position ably filled for fourteen years, when he retired from the service and settled near Champoege, in the Willamette valley, where he died January 7, 1880. He married (1828) the daughter of Etienne Lucier, first settler of French Prairie, and had a large family of children. See interview with his daughter in *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, iv, p. 263; also *Oregon Pioneer Association Transactions*, 1879, p. 56.— Ed.

no river probably on the globe, frequented as much, could tell of more disastrous accidents.

At the dalles you enter a barren region, where drift wood is brought into every encampment by the Indians, for which they gladly receive a piece of tobacco in return. In the absence of the savages, the tombs of the dead are sometimes shamefully pillaged by civilized *Christian* travellers, taking away the very boards that cover the dead bodies, and thus leave them the prey of vultures and crows.

Indians linger on the Columbia as long as a salmon can be caught. Unconscious of the approaching winter, they do not lay in sufficient stock of provisions, and till late in the fall they may be seen picking up the dead and dying fishes which float in great numbers on the surface. In the immediate neighborhood of a camp the air is infected with the scent of [236] salmon in a state of putrefaction; they are suspended on trees, or on scaffolds, and to this unwholesome and detestable food has the improvident Indian recourse, when the days of his long lent commence.

You can scarcely form an idea of the deplorable condition of the poor petty tribes, scattered along the banks of the Columbia, of which the numbers visibly diminish from year to year. Imagine their dwellings, a few poor huts, constructed of rush, bark, bushes, or of pine branches, sometimes covered with skins or rags — around these miserable habitations lie scattered in profusion the bones of animals, and the offal of fishes of every tribe, amidst accumulated filth of every description. In the interior, you find roots piled up in a corner, skins hanging from cross poles, and fish boiling over the fire, a few dying embers; an axe to cut wood being seldom found among them. The whole stock of kitchen utensils, drinking vessels, dishes,

etc., are comprised in something like a fish-kettle, made of osier, and besmeared with gum — to boil this kettle stones are heated red hot and thrown into it. But the mess cooked in this way, can you guess what it is? No, not in twenty trials — it is impossible to divine what [237] the ingredients are that compose this outlandish soup!

But to pass from the *material* to the *personal*; what strange figures! faces thickly covered with grease and dirt — heads that have never felt a comb — hands! but such hands! a veritable pair of “jack of all trades,” fulfilling in rapid succession, the varied functions of the comb, the pocket-handkerchief, the knife, fork, and spoon — while eating, the process is loudly indicated by the crackling and discordant sounds that issue from the nose, mouth, throat, etc., a sight, the bare recollection of which is enough to sicken any person. Thus you can form some idea of their personal miseries — miseries, alas! that faintly image another species infinitely more saddening; for what shall I say in attempting to describe their moral condition? There prevails among the greater part of them, a kind of superstitious idolatry, (called medicine or juggling), that pays homage to the vilest animals; a degeneracy of morals which knows no stronger tie in conjugal obligations, than the caprice of the moment — a vehement, inordinate passion for gambling, that is prolonged to the time of repose — a laziness which nothing can induce them to shake off but the love of play, [238] or the pressing claim of hunger — they are in fine, addicted to the vilest habits of gluttony, dissimulation, etc. Such is the wretched condition of the poor savage tribes, along the Columbia. But amidst all this misery, there is fortunately one redeeming feature, a constant desire to discover some power superior to man; this disposition renders them attentive to the least word that seems to convey



the slightest knowledge of a Supreme Being, and hence the facility with which they believe anything that at all resembles the Word of God.

Very reverend and dear Father, your humble and obedient servant,

*P. J. De Smet, S. J.*

No. XX

A. M. D. G.

St. Ignatius, near the Kalispel Bay, {  
July 26th, 1846. }

VERY REV. AND DEAR FATHER PROVINCIAL,— The eighth day after my departure from Fort Vancouver, I landed safely at Walla Walla, with the goods destined for the different missions. In a few days all was ready, and having thanked the good and kind-hearted Mr. McBride,<sup>176</sup> the Superintendent of the Fort, who had rendered me every assistance in his power, we soon found ourselves on the way to the mountains leading a band of pack mules and horses over a sandy dry plain, covered with bunch grass and wormwood. We made about sixteen miles and encamped for the night, in a beautiful little meadow, watered by the Walla Walla river, where we found abundance of grass for our animals — these were soon unloaded and left free to graze [240] at leisure; we next made

<sup>176</sup> For Fort Walla Walla see our volume xxi, p. 278, note 73. The clerk in charge was William B. McBean (not McBride), an educated half-breed born in 1790 on the eastern side of the Rockies. In 1825 he was a subordinate at Fort Alexandria; from 1836 to 1842 in charge at Fort Babine. Thence he was sent to Fort Connolly (1842), and next (1845) succeeded Archibald McKinley at Walla Walla. He attained an unpleasant notoriety in connection with the Whitman massacre, because of his Catholic proclivities, and his tardiness in aiding the survivors; but most of the charges against him were unfounded. In New Caledonia he had a reputation for being despotic and wily, also somewhat fanatical in religious matters.— Ed.

a fire, put on the camp-kettle, stretched the bed, consisting of a buffalo-robe, and smoked together the friendly Indian pipe, whilst supper was preparing. We found ourselves at home and perfectly at ease in less than a quarter of an hour. The evening was clear and beautiful — not a cloud — our sleep, sound and refreshing, prepared us for an early start at dawn of day. We had a day's march, with pack animals, over an undulating plain, before we could reach the crossing of the Nez-percé or Lewis fork,<sup>177</sup> whose source is in the angle of the Rocky and Snowy Mountains, between the 42d and 44th degrees, near the sources of the western Rio Colorado, the Platte, the Yellow Stone, and the Missouri rivers: its western course till it reaches the Blue Mountains, and hence its northern direction till it joins the Columbia, together with its principal tributaries, are sufficiently known to you, and have been amply described already.

We found about a dozen Indian lodges called the Palooses, a portion of the Sapetan or Nez-percé tribe.<sup>178</sup> We procured from the Indians here some fresh salmon, for which we made them ample return in powder and lead. But as the grass was withered and scanty, and the [241] pilfering dispositions of these Indians rather doubtful, we resolved on proceeding eight or ten miles

<sup>177</sup> For the Lewis River see our volume vi, p. 277, note 86. The crossing must have been made not far from the boundary line between Walla Walla and Columbia counties on the south side of the river, and that between Franklin and Whitman counties on the northern bank.— ED.

<sup>178</sup> The Paloos were a Shahaptian tribe, nearly related, as De Smet says, to the Nez Percés. Their habitat was the north bank of Lewis River, from the mouth of Palouse River to that of the Lewis. Lewis and Clark called them "Palleotepel-lows," and credited them with 1,600 souls. In 1854 there were five hundred extant in three bands. They took part in the wars of 1855-58, but were thoroughly cowed by Colonel George Wright's invasion of their territory. In 1860 their agent reported that the remnant of the tribe had intermarried and settled among the Nez Percés, on the Lapwai reservation in Idaho, and after that their separate tribal existence lapsed.— ED.

farther, and encamped late in the evening on the Pavilion river.<sup>179</sup> The Nez-percé and Spokane plain is at least a thousand feet elevated above the bed of the river. It is dry, stony, undulating, covered with bunch and nutritious grass, with prickly pear and wormwood. The basaltic and volcanic formations which extend through the whole of this region, are really wonderful. We frequently passed ponds and small lakes embedded between walls of basaltic rocks — immense ranges of dark shining pillars, as if forced from the bosom of the plain, extend for some miles, resembling, not unfrequently, forts and ancient ruined cities and castles. We encamped several times near small but beautiful lakes, where ducks and geese, with their young broods, were swimming in great numbers. The Indians frequent these regions in search of the bitter and camash roots, very abundant here. In every one of their old encampments we observed great quantities of prairie-turtle shells, a proof of their being numerous and serving as food for the savages. Pheasants or quails were very abundant — we daily killed what we wanted for our meals.

[242] On the fifth day of our departure from Walla Walla, we reached the Spokane river,<sup>180</sup> and found a good fording for our animals. You will see with pleasure the chart I have made of the head waters of this river, which, though beautiful and interesting, is yet, like all the other rivers in Oregon, almost an unbroken succession of rapids, falls, and cascades, and of course ill-adapted in its present condition to the purposes of navigation. The two upper

<sup>179</sup> Now known as Palouse River, the largest northern tributary of the Lewis, below the Clearwater. Rising in eastern Idaho, it flows west and then south — through a considerable cañon in its lower course, forming falls over a hundred feet in height, about seven miles above its confluence with the Lewis.— ED.

<sup>180</sup> For Spokane River, see our volume xxvii, p. 366, note 185. De Smet probably crossed the river not far from the present city of Spokane.— ED.

valleys of the Cœur d'Alene are beautiful, and of a rich mould; they are watered by two deep forks, running into the Cœur d'Alene lake, a fine sheet of water, of about thirty miles in length by four or five broad, from which the river Spokane derives its source. I called the two upper forks the St. Joseph's and the St. Ignatius. They are formed by innumerable torrents, descending from the Pointed-Heart mountains, a chain of the Rocky Mountains.<sup>181</sup> The two upper valleys are about sixty or eighty miles long, and four or eight miles broad. I counted upwards of forty little lakes in them. The whole neighborhood of the Spokane river affords very abundant grazing, and in many sections is tolerably well timbered with pines of different species.

[243] On leaving the river we ascended by a steep Indian path. A few miles' ride across a pine forest brings you to a beautiful valley, leading to Colville, agreeably diversified by plains and forests, hemmed in by high wooded mountains, and by huge picturesque rocks towering their lofty heads over all the rest. Fountains and rivulets are here very numerous. After about thirty miles, we arrived at the foot of the Kalispel Mountain, in the neighborhood of St. Francis Regis, where already about seventy metis or half-breeds have collected to settle permanently. Several of them accompanied me across the mountain, the height of which is about five thousand feet above the level of the plain. Its access is very easy on the western side; on the eastern, the narrow path winds its snake-like course through a steep and dense forest.—After a march of about eight hours we arrived at the beautiful

<sup>181</sup> Of these two upper branches of the Cœur d'Alène, St. Joseph's has retained its name. Rising in the Bitter Root (not now called Pointed Heart) Mountains it flows northwest into the southern arm of Cœur d'Alène Lake. The St. Ignatius is now known as the Cœur d'Alène River; and through its valley runs the Northern Pacific Railway. See our volume xxvii, p. 365, note 184.—ED.

Kalispel Bay, on the margin of lake De Boey, almost in sight of the *Reduction* of St. Ignatius.— My letter to Mrs. P.,<sup>182</sup> which I insert here will make you acquainted with the whole history of that mission.

I remain, with the profoundest respect and [244] esteem,  
Very Rev. Father Provincial, your humble and obedient servant,

*P. J. De Smet, S. J.*

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A. M. D. G.

St. Ignatius, July 25th, 1846.

MADAM,— I am, indeed, ashamed at not having been able sooner to answer the letters which you had the kindness to write me on the 2d of September and the 7th of December, 1844. They reached the Rocky Mountains only the year after, while I was engaged in a distant mission among the Indians, so that I received them only in the month of July, 1846. If it had been in my power to forward you an answer before this moment, my heart assures me that I would have done it without delay, for I must tell you here, that the debt of gratitude which my poor Indians and myself owe you is very great; and I felt impatient to inform you, that we have already begun to pray for you, for your dear and amiable children, and for your intentions. I have given directions to the Indians of these different tribes, viz., the Flat-Heads, the Pends [245] d'Oreilles, and the Cœur d'Alenes, to recite, every week, the Rosary for one of their great benefactresses, meaning yourself. Now, you cannot but be aware, that, among the Indians, the beads are recited in each family, so that I am already assured, and I have the consolation

<sup>182</sup> Mrs. S. Parmentier of Brooklyn, a liberal donor to Father de Smet's missions, to whom the following letter is addressed.— ED.

of saying to you, that many thousand pairs of beads have already been offered up to God and his august mother for you. Those good Indians — those children of the forest — so dear to my heart, will continue to display their gratitude till I tell them to cease, and that will not be very soon. What confidence have I not in the prayers of those Indians, whose merit is known only to God! Oh! if it is true that the prayer of him who possesses the innocence, the simplicity, and the faith of a child, pierces the clouds — is all-powerful, and is certainly heard — then be assured that in these new missions, in which the finger of God has been so visibly manifested, these virtues reign pre-eminently, and that the prayer of the Indian will also be heard in your behalf! How happy should I be, my dear, excellent Madam, could I give you to understand how great, how sweet, how enrapturing is their devotion to the august mother of God! The name of Mary, which [246] pronounced in the Indian language, is something so sweet and endearing, delights and charms them. The hearts of these good children of the forest melt, and seem to overflow, when they sing the praises of her whom they, as well as we, call their mother. Oh! I feel confident, knowing, as I do, their dispositions, that they have a distinguished place in the heart of that Holy Virgin; and that, through the intercession of Mary, invoked by so many fervent souls, you will obtain from God whatever you ask; for I am too well acquainted with your piety to think that you would ask anything that was not calculated to promote the glory of God, the sanctification of your own soul, and that of your children.

Permit me, now, to say a few words concerning the Indians and myself, since the time I had the honor of conversing with you in B——, in the spring of 1843. On the 6th of November of the following year, the Rev. Father



A. Hoecken came to meet me, accompanied by several Indians of the tribe of Pends d'Oreilles of the Bay, among whom I had determined, two years before, to open a mission. They displayed every mark of friendship and joy at my return among them; they conducted me in triumph to their camp, [247] and received me there amidst volleys of musketry and the sounding of trumpets. It would be impossible to describe the feelings of my heart at thus meeting with the first band of my dear neophytes and children in God, and to represent to you the real joy which animated them on this occasion. How much had we not to communicate to each other! I gave them some little and to them interesting details of the vast countries through which I had travelled in order to promote the interest and welfare of the Indians, since I bade them farewell, that is, within fifteen months. I had crossed the great American desert, and passed through so many warlike, nomadical nations, extending from the Pacific Ocean to the frontier of the State of Missouri. I had travelled over the United States from New Orleans to Boston — crossed the Atlantic — seen a great part of Ireland and England — the whole of Belgium, Holland and France. From Marseilles I had passed by Genoa, the city of palaces, Leghorn, and Civitta Vecchia, to visit the Capital of the Christian world. From Rome I had gone to Anvers, and then, sailing round Cape Horn, touching at Chili and Peru, and having twice crossed the Equator, I had at length disembarked [248] at Fort Vancouver, on the Columbia, and had the happiness to embrace, on the 6th of November, my dear neophytes, who had prayed so fervently for me, that, during all these long voyages, by sea and land, passing through so many different climates, and at all seasons of the year, I had not been troubled either by sickness or any untoward accident. Glory to

God for so special a protection, and a thousand thanks to the good Indians who, from the moment of my departure until my return, had not ceased to invoke, morning and evening, the blessing and assistance of Heaven on its unworthy servant.

The details which the young missionary gave me respecting their present dispositions, are too interesting to be here omitted; and I give them in proof of the divine grace over the hearts of this well-disposed people. All that I had recommended to them in the visits I paid them in 1841-42, had been strictly complied with. "The first thing," says Father Adrien Hoecken in a letter home, "which struck me on my arrival among them, was a truly brotherly love and perfect union, which animated the whole tribe, and seemed to make [249] them but one family. They manifest great love, obedience and respect for their chiefs, and what is still more admirable, they all, as the chiefs themselves declare, speak and desire but one and the same thing. These chiefs are as much the real fathers of their people as is a good Superior the father of a religious community. The chiefs among the Kalispels speak calmly, but never in vain; the instant they intimate their wish to one of their followers, he sets to work to accomplish it. Is any one involved in difficulties—is he in want or sickness,—or does he wish to undertake a journey, whether long or short—he consults his chief, and shapes his conduct in accordance with the advice he receives. Even with regard to marriage, the Indians consult their chiefs, who sanction, or postpone it, or disapprove of it, according as they deem it conducive, or otherwise, to the happiness of the parties. The chief, in quality of father, endeavors to provide for the support of his people. It is he, consequently, who regulates hunting, fishing, and the gathering of roots and fruit. All the

game and fish are brought to his lodge, and divided into as many shares as there are families. The distribution is made with rigid impartiality. The old, the infirm, the [250] widow, all receive their share equally with the hunter. Is not this something like the return of the golden age — those happy times when every thing was held in common and all had, as the apostle informs us, but one heart and one soul? Complaints, murmurings and backbiting are here unknown; blasphemy has never been uttered by an Indian: there are not even words in his language to express it." On the arrival of the *Black-gown*, the great chiefs explained to him, with patriarchal simplicity, their manner of life. "We are ignorant," he added, "but now that we have the happiness to have a *Black-gown* among us, we will listen to his voice and obey it; whatever changes he may deem necessary to make, we will cheerfully submit."

The *Black-gown* confirmed and approved all the good practices and customs he found established in this little corner of the world, where, notwithstanding their poverty, the Indians all seemed contented and happy. It is really affecting to hear them speak of the darkness in which they had been buried; and to see them now exulting in the light of the gospel, and the knowledge of the Christian virtues, which they cherish, and by which their hearts seem to be inflamed. Their whole ambition consists in listening [251] with docility to the word of God, and in being able thoroughly to understand and recite their prayers. Piety is what a young man seeks in her who is to be his future wife — and what a young woman desires to find in him who is to become her husband. In their leisure hours they surround, and, if I may be allowed the expression, besiege their missionary. To the day they would add the night, if he could bear the fatigue,

in speaking of heavenly things. Pride and human respect, are absolutely unknown to them. How often have we not seen gray-headed old men and even chiefs, sit down by the side of children ten or eleven years old, who would teach them their prayers, and explain to them the figures of the *Catholic Ladder*, with all the gravity becoming a teacher; and give to the explanation, for one or two hours, all the attention of obedient pupils. In seasons of scarcity, when the fishing or hunting has failed, or in other misfortunes, they manifest no signs of impatience. They are quiet and resigned receiving them as punishments for their sins; while their success they attribute to the bounty of God, and render to Him all the glory of it.

The usual place of residence of the Kalispels — that in which the *Reduction of St. Ignatius* is [252] now established — is an extensive prairie, called the Bay of the Kalispels, thirty or forty miles above the mouth of Clark or Flat-Head River. A beautiful grotto exists in the neighborhood of the mission, which I have named the grotto of Manresa, in honor of our Holy Founder. It is very large, and might, at a small expense, be fitted up for a church. May the Indians gather in crowds into this new Manresa, and after the example of their patron, St. Ignatius, be penetrated with a feeling sense of heavenly things, and inflamed with the love of God!

I shall always remember with pleasure the winter of 1844-45, which I had the happiness of spending among these good Indians. The place for wintering was well chosen, picturesque, agreeable, and convenient. The camp was placed near a beautiful waterfall, caused by Clark river's being blocked up by an immense rock, through which the waters, forcing narrow passages, precipitate themselves. A dense and interminable forest protected us from the north winds, and a countless number of dead

trees standing on all sides, furnished us with abundant fuel for our fires during the inclement season. We were encircled by ranges of lofty mountains, whose snow-clad summits reflected [253] in the sun, their brightness on all the surrounding country.

The place for wintering being determined, the first care of the Indians was to erect the house of prayer. While the men cut down saplings, the women brought bark and mats to cover them. In two days this humble house of the Lord was completed — humble and poor indeed, but truly the *house of prayer*, to which pure, simple, innocent souls repaired, to offer to the Great Spirit their vows, and the tribute of their affections. Here the missionaries continued with care and diligence, their instructions preparatory to baptism. How consoling was it to see ourselves surrounded by this fervent band, who had renounced the chase of the buffalo — a pleasure so attracting to an Indian — and had come from various parts of the country to place themselves under our direction, in the well-founded hope of being speedily regenerated in the saving waters of baptism. They had already learned their prayers, and all those things which it was necessary they should practise. They applied with ardor to become acquainted with the nature and obligations of the Sacrament of regeneration, and the dispositions required for its worthy reception.

[254] The great festival of Christmas, the day on which the little band was to be added to the number of the true children of God, will never be effaced from the memory of our good Indians. The manner in which we celebrated midnight mass, may give you an idea of our festival. The signal for rising, which was to be given a few minutes before midnight, was the firing of a pistol, announcing to the Indians that the house of prayer would soon be

open. This was followed by a general discharge of guns, in honor of the birth of the Infant Saviour, and three hundred voices rose spontaneously from the midst of the forest, and intoned in the language of the Pends d'Oreilles, the beautiful canticle: "*Du Dieu puissant tout annonce la gloire.*"—"The Almighty's glory all things proclaim." In a moment a multitude of adorers were seen wending their way to the humble temple of the Lord — resembling indeed, the manger in which the Messiah was born. On that night, which all at once became bright as day, they experienced, I know not what, that which made them exclaim aloud, "Oh God! I give Thee my heart." Oh! I trust that the happy impression which this unwonted spectacle made upon their hearts, will never be effaced. Of [255] what was our little church of the wilderness constructed? I have already told you — of posts fresh cut in the woods, covered over with mats and bark; these were its only materials. On the eve, the church was embellished with garlands and wreaths of green boughs; forming, as it were, a frame for the images which represent the affecting mysteries of Christmas night. The interior was ornamented with pine branches. The altar was neatly decorated, bespangled with stars of various brightness, and covered with a profusion of ribbons — things exceedingly attractive to the eye of an Indian. At midnight I celebrated a solemn Mass, the Indians sang several canticles suitable to the occasion. That peace announced in the first verse of the Angelic hymn — "*The Gloria,*—Peace on earth to men of good will," was, I venture to say, literally fulfilled to the Indians of the forest. A grand banquet, according to Indian custom, followed the first Mass. Some choice pieces of the animals slain in the chase had been set apart for the occasion. I ordered half a sack of flour, and a large boiler of sweetened coffee



to be added. The union, the contentment, the joy, and charity, which pervaded [256] the whole assembly, might well be compared to the *agape* of the primitive Christians.

After the second High Mass, all the adults, with the chiefs at their head, presented themselves in the church to receive baptism, the fulfilment of their longing desires. The old man and woman whom I baptized two years before, were sponsors for all. The men were placed on the one side, according to the custom of Paraguay, and the women on the other. I was assisted during the ceremony, by Father Hoecken, their worthy and zealous missionary. Everything was done in order and with propriety. Permit me to repeat here that I should be delighted could I but communicate to the zealous and fervent, those pleasurable feelings — that overflowing of the heart, which one experiences on such occasions. Here, indeed, the Indian missionary enjoys his greatest consolations: here he obtains his strength, his courage, his zeal to labor to bring men to the knowledge of the true God, in spite of the poverty, the privations of every description, and the dangers with which he has to contend. Yes, surely, even in this life is the promise of the Saviour fulfilled with regard to him, "Ye shall receive [257] a hundred fold." The trifling things of the world he abandons, are nothing to be compared with the blessings he finds in the wilderness. The priest does not address in vain to the Indians, those beautiful words of the Roman ritual; "Receive this white garment, etc.," "Receive this burning taper, etc." He may be certain that the greater number of his catechumens will wear that spotless garment — will preserve their baptismal innocence, to the hour of their death. When I have afterwards asked them, if they have not offended God? if their conscience does not reproach them with some fault? how often have I

received this touching and consoling answer: "Oh, Father! in baptism I renounced sin, I try to avoid sin, the very thought of offending God, frightens me!" The ceremonies of baptism were closed by a second instruction, and by the distribution of beads which the Indians are accustomed to say every evening in public.

About 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the solemn benediction of the blessed sacrament was given for the first time, immediately after which, upwards of fifty couples, many of whom were eighty years old, came forward to renew before the Church, their marriage promises. I could not [258] help shedding tears of joy at witnessing this truly primitive simplicity, and the love and affection with which they pledged again their faith to each other. The last instruction was then given, and thanks were returned to God for all the blessings he had vouchsafed to shower upon them, on this ever-memorable day. The recitation of prayers and the chanting of hymns were heard in all the lodges of the camp, till the night was far advanced.

Fathers Mengarini and Serbinati, (the last-mentioned Father has since died), had the consolation to see the whole tribe of the Flat-Heads, among whom they had been laboring, approach the Holy Table on this day. Twelve young Indians, taught by Father Mengarini, performed with accuracy, several pieces of music during the midnight Mass. Fathers Point and Joset had, also, the consolation of admitting for the first time, nearly the entire tribe of the Cœur d'Alenes, on this auspicious day, to the Holy Communion. Father Point has given the particulars of this first communion in a letter, which has been published, and which you have, no doubt, read with pleasure. The Christmas of 1844 was, therefore, a great and glorious day in the Rocky Mountains.

[259] I will close this already lengthy letter with a few

words more concerning the Pends d'Oreilles of the Bay. Early in the spring of 1845, they began to build upon the spot selected for the *Reduction* of St. Ignatius, and to open fields. On Ascension day of the same year, Father Hoecken administered baptism to upwards of a hundred adults. At my last visit, which I paid them in July last, they had already put up fourteen log houses, besides a large barn, had the timber prepared for a church, and had upwards of three hundred acres in grain, enclosed by a substantial fence. The whole village, men, women, and children, had worked most cheerfully. I counted thirty head of horned cattle — the squaws had learned to milk the cows and to churn; they had a few hogs and some domestic fowls. The number of Christians had doubled since Christmas, 1844.

A flour and saw mill, a few more ploughs, with other agricultural implements, and carpenter's tools, were much wanted in the village of St. Ignatius. All is to be commenced among these poor, good Indians, and to us they look for means and supplies, which we readily grant as far as we are able. Already was an appeal made to the generous and charitable [260] Christians, and it is consoling for me to say, that appeal found an echo in the hearts of the friends of the Indians, which enabled us to enlarge our missionary operations, and I may add, that the grateful prayer of the Indians is daily ascending to the throne of the Almighty, to implore the blessings of Heaven on their benefactors. In 1845 and '46, several stations were formed, and the extensive mission of New Caledonia was commenced.

I remain, with profound respect and esteem, madam,  
your very humble and obedient servant,

*P. J. De Smet, S. J.*

## No. XXI

A. M. D. G.

Valley of St. Mary's, Aug. 10, 1846.

VERY REV. AND DEAR FATHER PROVINCIAL,— On the 27th July, I bade farewell to Father Hoecken and his interesting little flock, consisting of about five hundred Indians. I was accompanied by two Kalispels, and some of the Cœur d'Alenes, who came to meet me. We had beautiful weather, and a path remarkably free from those obstructions so annoying to travellers in the mountains. Towards the middle of our day's journey, we reached a beautiful lake surrounded by hills, and a thick forest of larch. I have named it the Lake de Nef, as a token of gratitude towards one of the greatest benefactors of the mission. It discharges itself through a narrow passage, forming a beautiful rapid, called the Tournhout-torrent,<sup>183</sup> at the termination [262] of which it joins its limpid waters to those of the river Spokane.

Next day the sun rose majestically, and everything gave promise of an agreeable day, but these fine appearances were gradually lost behind a thick bank of ominous clouds, which, shortly after overspreading the sky, poured down such torrents of rain, that everything on us was drenched as completely as if we had waded through a river. At the foot of the great rapids, we crossed the river Spokane,<sup>184</sup> and continued our route over an extensive plain, agreeably interspersed with thick groves of pine, when towards sunset we encamped close by a refreshing fountain.

<sup>183</sup> Apparently this was the present Blake's Lake, in northern Spokane County, which discharges by the West Branch into Little Spokane River. No other lake north of Spokane River appears to answer to De Smet's description. Blake's is about three miles long and a half mile wide, and is in the forest region.— ED.

<sup>184</sup> Probably Spokane Falls, the site of the modern city of that name.— ED.

A few words descriptive of our encampments during wet weather, may not be out of place. The tent erected in haste — saddles, bridles, baggage, etc., thrown into some sheltered spot — large heaps of larch branches or brushwood are cut down, and spread over the spot of ground destined for our repose — provision of as much dry wood as can be collected is now brought forth for the whole night; on this occasion we made a fire large enough to roast an ox. These preparations completed, our meal (dinner and supper the same time) consisting of flour, camash [263] roots, and some buffalo tallow, is thrown into a large kettle nearly filled with water. The great heat obliging the cook to stand at a respectable distance from the fire, a long pole serves as a ladle to stir about the contents until the mixture has acquired the proper density, when a vigorous attack is made upon it after a singular fashion indeed. On the present occasion we were six in number, trusting to a single spoon, but necessity soon supplied the deficiency. Two of the company used pieces of bark; two others, strips of leather; and the fifth, a small turtle-shell. Grace being said, a circle is formed round the kettle, and the instruments plunge and replunge into it with as much regularity and address, as a number of smiths' hammers plying at the anvils — a few moments, and the contents of the large kettle are gone, leaving not a vestige behind. We found this repast delicious, thanks to our keen appetites. Making due allowance for the tastes of others, "*de gustibus enim nil disputandum*," I confess I have never enjoyed a feast more heartily, than such as I have now described, prepared in the open air, after the Indian fashion. All the refined inventions of the art culinary, as sauces, pickles, preserves, pies, etc., designed to quicken [264] or restore weak appetites, are here utterly useless. Loss of appetite, which

among the wealthy forms the reigning complaint, furnishing abundant employment to apothecaries and doctors, is here unheard of. If these patients would have the courage to abandon for a time their high living, and traverse the wilds of this region on horseback, breakfasting at day-break, and dining at sunset, after a ride of forty miles, I venture to predict that they will not need any refined incitements to relish as I did a simple dish prepared by the Indians. Having dried our blankets and said night prayers, our repose was not less sound for having fared so simply, or lain upon a rough couch of brushwood. We started early the next morning, and about mid-day arrived at the mission of the Sacred Heart, where I was received with the greatest cordiality by Fathers Joset and Point, with B. B. Magri and Lyons.<sup>185</sup> All the Cœur d'Alenes of the neighborhood came to welcome me. The fervor and piety of these poor Indians filled me with great joy and consolation, especially when I considered how great the change wrought in them since their conversion to Christianity. The details of this conversion have, I believe, been published by Father Point, and [265] by the way, I may remark here, that some incidents connected with my previous mission to this country, are inserted in this letter. To these details I may add, that these Indians previous to their conversion, were shunned by the other tribes, on account, it is said, of their great power in juggling and other idolatrous practices. Indeed, they were addicted to superstitions the most absurd, blindly offering adoration to the vilest beasts, and the most common objects. Now, they are the first to scoff at these ridiculous

<sup>185</sup> For the mission of Sacred Heart see our volume xxvii, p. 365, note 184. A sketch of Father Point is given in the same volume, p. 192, note 67; those of Father Joset and Brother Magri, *ante*, p. 139, note 42. For a description and engraving of this mission as it appeared in 1853 see 35 Cong., 2 sess., *Senate Docs.*, vol. 18, pp. 112-114.—ED.



practices, adding at the same time, with much feeling and veneration, "God has had pity on us — He has opened our eyes — He is infinitely good to us." A single instance will serve to give you some idea of the objects of their worship, and the facility with which they adopt their manitous or divinities. They related to me, that the first white man they saw in their country, wore a calico shirt spotted all over with black and white, which to them appeared like the smallpox, he also wore a white coverlet. The Cœur d'Alenes imagined that the spotted shirt was the great manitou himself — the great master of that alarming disease, the smallpox — and that the white coverlet was the great manitou of the snow; that if they [266] could obtain possession of these, and pay them divine honors, their nation would never afterwards be visited by that dreadful scourge; and their winter hunts be rendered successful by an abundant fall of snow. They accordingly offered him in exchange for these, several of their best horses. The bargain was eagerly closed by the white man. The spotted shirt and the white coverlet became thenceforward, objects of great veneration for many years. On grand solemnities, the two manitous were carried in procession to a lofty eminence, usually consecrated to the performance of their superstitious rites. They were then respectfully spread on the grass: the great medicine-pipe offered to them, with as much veneration, as it is customary with the Indians, in presenting it to the sun, the fire, the earth, and the water. The whole band of jugglers, or medicine-men, then intoned canticles of adoration to them. The service was generally terminated with a grand dance, in which the performers exhibited the most hideous contortions and extravagant gestures, accompanied with a most unearthly howling.

The term *medicine* is commonly employed by the whites,

to express whatever regards the [267] juggling, idolatrous practices of the savages; probably, because the Indian feeling his ignorance of the proper remedies in sickness, and almost wholly dependent upon chance for his subsistence, merely demands of his manitous some relief in these distressing situations. This *something* that the Indians call Power, is at times limited, say they, to the procuring of only one object, as the cure of some disease. Some other Power, again, is not so limited, it extends to many objects, as success in hunting, fishing, waging war, and avenging injuries. All this, however, varies according to the degree of confidence reposed in it by the individual, the number of his passions or the intensity of his malice. Some of the Powers are looked upon even by the savages themselves, as wicked in the extreme, the sole object of such Powers is to do evil. Moreover it is not at all times granted, even when those professing to be most powerful medicine-men, earnestly desire it. It comes only during sleep, in a fainting fit, during a loud clap of thunder, or in the delirious excitement of some passion; but never without some definite purpose, as to foment dissensions, or exasperate to deeds of violence, or to obtain some corporal advantage; favors which are always [268] purchased at the expense of the soul. Much exaggeration is, of course, clearly characteristic of those misnamed effects of preternatural power. Most of those that came under my notice, and which the Indians attributed to preternatural agency, were the effects of causes purely natural. Notwithstanding these deplorable disorders of the soul, it is my greatest consolation to reflect, that these superstitious practices, in consequence of the many palpable contradictions they admit, become a spiritual malady, the least difficult to cure.

On the 5th of August, I left the Mission of the "Sacred

Heart of Jesus," accompanied by the Rev. Father Point. Three Indian families, desirous of visiting St. Mary's, served us for guides. Our journey for some days, lay along the serpentine course of the river St. Ignatius, in the valley of the North. The soil of this valley is for the most part rich, and well adapted to cultivation, but subject to frequent inundations. Grain and potatoes are here cultivated by the Indians with great success. Father Joset, assisted by the savages, has already enclosed and prepared for cultivation, a large field, capable of affording sustenance to several Indian families. Our hopes, then, of seeing [269] these poor Indians furnished with a plentiful supply of provisions, and their wandering habits thereby checked, will with the blessing of God, be realized at no very distant day. To attain the desirable object of uniting them in villages, and thus forming them to habits of industry, we need, however, more means than we possess at present — we are very much in want of seeds of various kinds, and of agricultural implements.

Before arriving at the snow-capped chain of mountains, which separates the Cœur d'Alenes from the Flat-Heads, we wound our way for two days, through forests almost impenetrable and over immense beds of rock, always following the course of the river, except where its tortuous windings would lead us too circuitous a route.<sup>186</sup> So tortuous indeed is its course here, that in less than eight hours, we crossed it no less than forty-four times. The majestic cedars that shade the gorge at this point are truly prodigious, most of them measure from twenty to thirty feet in circumference, with a proportionate height, and so numerous, that as the rays of the sun cannot penetrate

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<sup>186</sup> The Bitterroot Mountains, which the travellers were approaching by way of Cœur d'Alène River, along which passed the Mullens road, and now the Northern Pacific Railway.—ED.

the dense mass, perpetual night may be said, without exaggeration, to reign here. I doubt whether the [270] owl could have selected a more fitting abode, certainly none so majestic or mysterious. The death-like silence of this glen, broken only by the passing breeze, the occasional visit of some wild animal, or the constant murmuring of the rills from the rocky banks, impress the beholder with feelings of a most unearthly yet pleasing nature.

With much difficulty and fatigue we forced a passage through this dense mass of forest, stooping half the time upon the neck of the horse, to avoid the low thorny branches, so thickly crossed together, that one is inclined at first sight, to abandon all hope of wedging his way through them. Its termination brought us to the foot of the great chain of mountains. It occupied us nearly another day to ascend this by a narrow winding path, which is shaded by one of the finest forests in Oregon. Towards sunset we reached the top, where we pitched our camp, within a few paces of one of those immense snow masses, that perpetually shroud this lofty chain. Here we enjoyed a most magnificent view — the horizon for some hundred miles around presented a spectacle of surpassing grandeur: as far as the eye could reach, a long succession of mountains, towering cliffs, [271] and lofty pinnacles, exhibited their dazzling snow-capped summits to our astonished vision. The very silence of this vast wilderness strikes the beholder with feelings of deep sublimity; not even a breeze stirred to break the charm of this enchanting view. I shall never forget the splendor of the scene we witnessed, as the last rays of the setting sun were throwing their full lustre upon the myriads of pinnacles that ranged far away towards the distant horizon.

The descent on the eastern side of this mountain is less abrupt, presenting slopes of rich verdure, adorned with

a great variety of plants and flowers. This descent also occupied us an entire day. We next arrived at a forest, a twin-sister, if I may be allowed the expression, of the one I have just described. Here the river St. Francis Regis meanders through innumerable hoary cedars, pine trees, and an impenetrable thicket of bushes of every species. With the happiest recollections, we finally encamped on the banks of the St. Mary's river, in the Flat-Head valley — the nursery of our first missionary operations in the Far West.<sup>187</sup>

In my next, I propose giving you some details of the present condition of our first children in God, the good and deserving Flat-Heads. [272] I recommend myself to God in your prayers.

I remain, with profound respect and esteem, reverend and dear Father, your very humble servant, and brother in Christ,

*P. J. De Smet, S. J.*

No. XXII

LETTER OF THE REV. FATHER POINT, S. J.,  
MISSIONARY IN OREGON

Village of the Sacred Heart of Jesus,  
———, 1845.

I LEARN by letters from Europe, that you take a lively interest in our dear missions. From this, I conclude that you will be very glad to learn some of those things which are passing amongst us. I take the more pleasure, because I can detail what my own eyes have witnessed,

<sup>187</sup> The river here called St. Francis Regis is the same as St. Regis Borgia, for which see note 71, *ante*, p. 174. De Smet advanced down that stream to its junction with the Missoula, up the Missoula to St. Mary's (or Bitterroot) River thence to the mission, for which see our volume xxvii, p. 282, note 145.—ED.

and because I can give a new proof of a truth, which you love to extend, viz., that it is to their devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, that the pastors of souls are indebted for the consolations they enjoy: this will explain the wonders of mercy of which they are witnesses.

You know already the history of the *Flat-Heads*; truly their conversion is the result of a wonderful outflowing of the riches of grace; but I do not hesitate to say, that the conversion [274] of the *Pointed-Hearts* is a still more striking indication of God's love to man. What were these savages less than a quarter of a century ago? They had hearts so hard, that if their first visitors have undertaken to give a true description of them, they could not find an expression more just, than is the singular name which they bear to this day. Their knowledge was so limited, that, giving themselves up to the worship of animals they had no idea of the true God nor of their soul, much less of a future life; finally they were a race of men, so degenerate that they had barely two or three notions of the whole natural law, and almost all were strangers to it in practice.

What a different aspect they now present! I will not say that they are perfect: that would be an exaggeration even in the eyes of persons little versed in the knowledge of the human heart. Everybody knows, that people who are converted, always retain something of their primitive character, and that the defects of education are not corrected except by a long course of years; but I say to the glory of Him, who can change the hardest rocks into children of Abraham, that, at this day, our *Pointed-Hearts* are true believers.

[275] It is only two years since the cross was planted on their soil, and all, with a very few exceptions, have made their first communion.



About fifteen years ago, several missionaries begged to be employed among the savages. A new doctrine was soon spread among the Pointed-Hearts, telling them that there is but one God, who has, beyond the earth we see, two things which we do not see:—a place for the good, and a place for the bad; that the Son of God, in all respects like his Father, seeing all men running in the bad road, came down from Heaven to put them in the right way; but that in order to effect this, it was necessary for him to die upon a cross. One evening, all the families, who were dispersed in different directions, for fishing, for hunting, and gathering roots, assembled upon the ground of an old chief called Ignatius,<sup>188</sup> to see the author of this news. Regardless of fatigue, they prolonged their sitting to the silence of the night, and listened to all the details of the glorious message.

God is great—Jesus Christ is good:—two truths the admission of which seemed to be the result of the first sitting: was this, indeed, the case? Not so much, perhaps, as would have been desirable: for before the families separated, [276] Heaven sent a scourge, which struck with death a great number of them. At the moment it raged with the greatest violence, one of the dying—since named Stephen—heard a voice from above, which said: “Cast down thy idols; adore Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be cured.” The dying man believed the word, and was cured. He went about the camp and related what had taken place: all the sick who heard him imitated his example, and recovered their health. I have this fact from the mouth of the savage who heard the voice from heaven, and the same has been confirmed by eye-witnesses, who could say, “I, myself, have been the object of that wonder, and my eyes have seen

<sup>188</sup> For this Iroquois Indian see our volume xxvii, p. 230, note 104.—ED.

the mountain at the foot of which the idols were cast down."

The savage takes little notice of an event which does not strike him in a sensible manner; but what I have related was marked by two such peculiar characters, that it left traces in the memory of all. However, neither constancy nor reflection is to be found in the savage. After some years of fidelity to the impressions received, the greater part returned to their former idolatry. This retrograde movement was accelerated by the medicine-men — a kind [277] of charlatans, who set themselves up for physicians and prophets, and pretend to perform wonderful things, especially, to cure the sick by their skill and supernatural power. At the word of one of the chiefs, who, probably, had not ceased to be an idolater, the men convoked an assembly of those who were called believers, in which it was resolved to return to their ancient practices; and, from that moment, the animals of the country, now become again divine, re-entered into possession of their ancient honors. The mass of the tribe, had, indeed, no confidence in them; but, either through fear of the medicine-men, or by natural curiosity, they took part, at least by their presence, in the sacrilegious worship paid to them. Happily, choice souls were always among them to intercede with Heaven for their deluded brethren; I know many, who, from the time in which God was pleased to manifest himself among them, have not the least faults upon their consciences, with which to reproach themselves.

Such was pretty nearly the condition of the people when Providence sent among them the Rev. Father De Smet. His visit, the circumstances of which have been related elsewhere, [278] disposed them so much in favor of the *Black-gowns*, that it was determined I should be sent to their aid. Three months after, that is, at the close

of the hunting expeditions of the autumn of 1842, I left St. Mary's to place the new converts under the protection of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The same day I entered their territory, the first Friday of November, I made with three chiefs who came to seek me, the promised consecration, and on the first Friday of December, in the midst of chants and prayers, the cross was raised on the borders of a lake, where the poor savages had united for fishing. Thanks be to God, we can say, that the miraculous draught of St. Peter was spiritually renewed. For they spoke no more of their assemblies of impostors, their diabolical visions, nor superstitious ceremonies, which had before been so common; and most important of all, gambling, which had always occupied a great portion of their time, was two weeks afterwards, abandoned; the conjugal bond, which for centuries, perhaps, had known among them neither unity nor indissolubility, was brought back to its primitive character. A beautiful sight was presented by the *medicine-men* themselves, [279] who with their own hands, did justice to the wretched instruments hell had used to deceive them. During the long nights of that period, it will not be necessary to tell how many sacrifices were made of feathers, wolves' tails, stags' feet, deer's hoofs, wooden images, &c.

Scarcely was the bad tree cut down and thrown into the fire, than a blessing on their temporal affairs was united to that of their spiritual. In one day three hundred deer became the prey of the hunters.

The first days of spring, the reunion of the people at the place agreed on for the construction of a village was more numerous than the first. It was formed upon the ancient plans in Paraguay, and each one, according to his strength and industry, contributed towards its construction. Trees were felled, roads opened, a church

erected, and the public fields were sown; and, thanks to the piety of our savages, Holy Week, Easter, Ascension, and Pentecost were celebrated with becoming solemnity. In truth, things went so well, that the enemy of men, perceiving his prey escape him, redoubled his efforts. We experienced some loss in consequence of a storm; but after a partial destruction, [280] the storm only resulted in purifying the atmosphere.

Towards the end of October, 1844, one hundred families of the Pointed-Hearts reunited in one village. The sight of their little lodges around the house of God, brought to mind the touching idea of the pelican in the desert. Young and old united to make their first communion, or renew it. Many had already acquired a certain degree of instruction, but the greater portion, especially of the old, were far from being sufficiently instructed; and the time the Black-gown had to prepare them before the great winter chase, was November and December, for the chase could not be put off, it is essential to the life of a savage. It was necessary, then, to hasten, and choose the shortest method of instructing them.

Everybody knows the savage has the eye of a lynx, and never forgets what he has once seen; therefore when he attaches any idea to a sensible sign, he can always recall it as soon as he sees the sign under his eyes; thus they have a wonderful facility in speaking by signs, and a great inclination to render their thoughts by images: upon this faculty I based my system of instruction. I made images, representing [281] what they ought to believe. Some of these represented the faults and vices they ought to shun, others the virtues they should practice. After this, with a little stick in my hand, I explained my representations, and tried to adapt myself to the understanding of all.



View of the new mission Establishment in 1846, among the Pointed-Hearts  
(See Letter 21)





The success of this method surpassed my expectation: for, having made the most intelligent repeat what I had said, I had the pleasure to see that they lost nothing of what was essential, and immediately I formed classes for repetition. The first repetition was made immediately after the instruction; the second in their lodges, the third by the chiefs in their harangues, and the fourth at the beginning of the next instruction.

The plan was insisted upon, and rapid progress made, not only in their instruction, but also in their morals. Those who exhorted joined to their exhortations the force of private example, so that the mass of the people seemed to be led on, by attraction.

From the 9th of September to the time in which I write — a period of six months — not one single fault, which can be called serious, so far as my knowledge extends, has been committed in the village of the Sacred Heart of Jesus; and a great many, who reproached themselves [282] with light failings, cease not to make public confession in terms of grief, which it would be desirable to see the greater culprits exhibit at the tribunal of penance. I have seen husbands come after their wives, and mothers after their daughters, not to excuse the accusations which they had made, but to acknowledge that their want of patience and humility were the cause of the failings of the others.

It is worthy of remark that [of] all the adults, who had not yet received baptism, and all who united to prepare for their first communion, not one was judged unworthy to receive the sacraments. Their simplicity, piety, charity, and especially their faith, were admirable. And truly all these virtues were necessary for these good old men, who, for the sake of learning their prayers, had to become the scholars of their children, and for the children to enable

them to do violence to their natural vivacity, while they slowly communicated to their old parents and grandparents, a part of what they had learned; and the chiefs would rise at the dawn of day, and sometimes in the middle of the night, to exhort their *people to weep over their sins*.

I have spoken of their faith. How pure and [283] above all, how confiding it was! The first idea, necessary to impress on their minds was, that the goodness of God is not less great than his power, and they were so convinced of it, that they begged God to perform miracles, as they would beg their daily bread. They were told, that the sacrament of extreme unction had the power not only to purify the soul, but to restore health to the body; it did not occur to them to doubt of the one more than of the other.

They have great faith in the sign of the cross. They are accustomed to make it at the beginning of their prayers, and of all their principal actions. Not satisfied with making it themselves, their children can scarcely pronounce a word, before they teach them to articulate the words of the sign of the cross. I saw a father and mother bending over the cradle of an only son, who was about to die. They made their best efforts to suggest to him to make the sign of the cross, and the child having raised his little hand to his forehead, made the consoling sign and immediately expired.

A woman, sitting near the grave of her only daughter, was conversing with her little boy, whom she had that day presented at the baptismal font. "See," said she, "my child, how [284] happy it is to die after being baptized! If you should die to-day, you would see again our little Clementia." And the pious mother exhibited such a calmness in her tone of voice and countenance,

that she seemed to have a foretaste of the happy abode of which she spoke.

Our infant church presented the picture of the purest virtues, when the happy period for which she sighed was approaching. The week preceding the celebration of the Immaculate Conception of the blessed Virgin Mary, was devoted to prepare the people for the reception of holy communion. The time, of course, did not admit of frequent instructions, long prayers and general confessions. The good Father Joset gave instructions. Their prayers were fervent, and experience had already taught them the necessity of true sorrow for past sins, which they exhibited in a lively manner at the confessional. I used all the exertions I could to prepare those whose understandings appeared more limited than the others; and their piety, calmness and perseverance, have put to flight all the fears which rested on my mind. The church was small; it measured in length fifty feet, and in breadth twenty-four. It was indeed, [285] poor, but from every part of the wall and ceiling, were suspended rich festoons of leaves. While the stars were still shining in the firmament, the chant, *Lauda Sion*, was heard. But who sung that divine canticle? The savages, who lately addressed their prayers only to the animals of their mountains. Go to the foot of the altar and see the new adorers, bowing their heads before the Eternal One. The representation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and of the Cross on which he expired, raised their thoughts to the abode of glory, and caused them to centre there all their affections. They approached the altar to receive holy communion with the greatest order and devotion. It was Father Joset who had happiness to distribute to them the bread of life,—a happiness, so much the more felt, as he had just arrived among them. Before they approached the holy

table, he addressed them a few words; but the tender piety apparent in all at the moment of communicating, made him fear to spoil the work of God by adding more words of his own, and he left them to their own devotion.

We recited the usual prayers for the intentions of the Church, and closed the morning services [286] by chanting again the *Lauda Sion*. The high mass was celebrated at ten o'clock.

In the evening took place the renovation of the promises of baptism. The church was illuminated, at least as well as our poverty would permit. The sacrament of baptism was conferred on twelve adults. After a preparatory instruction, instead of the ordinary formulas, which were a little difficult to be translated into the Indian language, all of them, to show their constant fidelity, recited three acts of love to God. In hearing them, we remarked, that like the prince of the Apostles, they replied to the three-fold enquiry of their Saviour. The holy sacrament was exposed. To the expression of unanimous and forcible love, their looks of piety directed towards the altar, seemed to add: O beauty! always ancient, always new! too late have we loved thee; but we will love thee forever! The benediction of the blessed sacrament followed, and closed that great and beautiful day, which had been so rich in every kind of spiritual gifts. It was with difficulty that these good souls left the place, which had, that day, been the witness of their prayers and promises. The Pointed-Hearts exhibited by their prayers, their canticles, and [287] their holy conversations, a foretaste of heavenly joys. They often came to visit the Black-gowns. Some days, I was surrounded by these visitors. They all waited in profound silence, till I had finished my office. One of them then chanted the first verse of *Lauda Sion*, in which all the voices joined. Thus, it is a consoling truth, that, at

the extremities of the heathen world, as well as in the centre of civilization, the church puts forth a united effort for the conversion and salvation of mankind.

I am, devotedly yours, in Christ,

*N. Point.*

No. XXIII

A. M. D. G.

Flat-Head Camp, Yellowstone River,  
September 6th, 1846.

REV. AND DEAR FATHER PROVINCIAL,— After an absence of about eighteen months, employed in visiting the various distant tribes, and extending among them the kingdom of Christ, I returned to the nursery, so to speak, of our Apostolic labors in the Rocky Mountains. Judge of the delight I experienced, when I found the little log church, we built five years ago, about to be replaced by another which will bear comparison with those in civilized countries, materials, everything ready to commence erecting it, the moment they can procure some ropes to place the heavy timbers on the foundation. Another agreeable surprise, however, yet awaited me; a mill had been constructed, destined to contribute largely to the increasing wants of the surrounding country. It is contrived to discharge [289] the two-fold charitable object of feeding the hungry and sheltering the houseless. The flour mill grinds ten or twelve bushels in a day; and the saw mill furnishes an abundant supply of plank, posts, etc., for the public and private building of the nation settled here.<sup>189</sup> Indeed,

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<sup>189</sup> The erection of the flour mill — the first in Montana — was due to the mechanical skill of Father Antonio Ravalli, who arrived at St. Mary's mission in the autumn of 1845. The grinding stones, fifteen inches in diameter, were brought from Europe, and are still preserved as curiosities in the museum of the present

the location stood much in need of so useful a concern. The soil yields abundant crops of wheat, oats and potatoes — the rich prairie here is capable of supporting thousands of cattle. Two large rivulets, now almost useless, can, with a little labor, be made to irrigate the fields, gardens, and orchards of the village. The stock at present on this farm, consists of about forty head of cattle, a fast-increasing herd of hogs and a prolific progeny of domestic fowl. In addition to the mill, twelve log houses, of regular construction, have been put up. Hence, you can form some idea of the temporal advantages enjoyed by the Flat-heads of St. Mary's village.

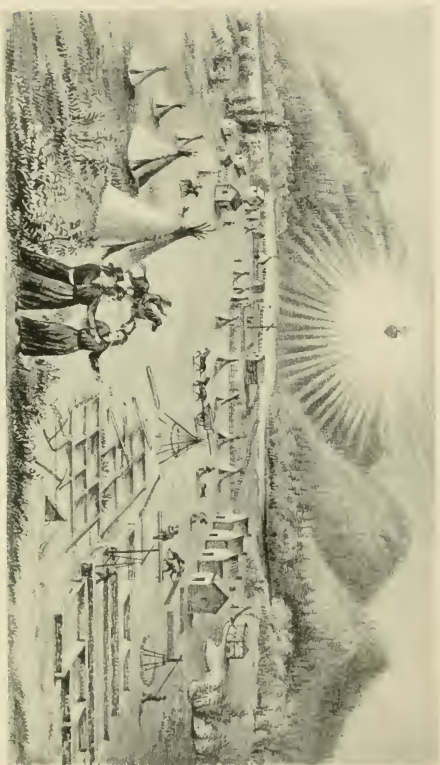
St. Mary's, or Bitter-Root valley, is one of the finest in the mountains, presenting, throughout its whole extent of about two hundred miles, numerous grazing, but few arable tracts of land. Irrigation, either by natural or artificial means, is absolutely necessary to the cultivation [290] of the soil, in consequence of the long summer drought that prevails in this region, commencing in April and ending only in October. This difficulty, however, if the country should be ever thickly settled, can be easily obviated, as the whole region is well supplied with numerous streams and rivulets. These remarks apply to the valleys contiguous to St. Mary's, the general aspect of them differing perhaps but slightly in regard to the heights of the mountains, the colossal dimensions of the rocks, or the vast extent of the plains.

After what has been said in my former letters in relation to religion, little now remains that has a direct reference to it; but you will learn with much pleasure, that the improvements made in the Flat-head village, afford the missionary stationed there great facilities for prosecuting

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St. Ignatius mission on the Flathead reservation. See Palladino, *Indian and White in the Northwest*, p. 46. The sawmill was made from wagon-tires, hammered and filed into a saw and a crank.— ED.





St. Mary's, among the Flat-heads  
(See Letter No. 23)



successfully the grand object of his desires, viz., the eternal happiness of the poor benighted Indian tribes, placed beyond the reach of his immediate influence. The village is now the centre of attraction to all the neighboring, and many of the distant tribes. The missionary always avails himself of these occasional visits, to convey to them the glad tidings of salvation. Among the recent visitors were, [291] the great chief of the Snake Indians with his band of warriors; the Banax and Nez-Percés, conducted by several of their chiefs,—even several bands of Black-Foot;<sup>190</sup> besides these, there were also, on their return from the great hunt, almost the whole tribe of the Pends-d'Oreilles, belonging to the station of St. Francis Borgia. These last in particular, the greater part of whom I baptized last year, may be said to rival the zeal of the Flat-Heads in the practice of their religious duties.

After the festival of Easter, the abundant supply of provisions, in the granaries and cellars of the village, enabled the minister to invite all the visitors present to a feast, consisting of potatoes, parsnips, turnips, beets, beans, peas, and a great variety of meats, of which the greater portion of the guests had never before tasted. Among the industrial products which are mainly owing to the skill and assiduity of their present pastor, Father Mengarini, I must not forget to mention a kind of sugar, extracted from the potato.

Let us next turn to the improved condition of the people themselves. Polygamy — or rather a connection, if possible, still more loose — is now, thank God, entirely abolished among our newly-converted [292] Indians; there is, consequently, an evident increase of population. The reckless

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<sup>190</sup> For the Snake (Shoshoni) Indians see our volume v, p. 227, note 122; the Bannock, xxi, p. 192, note 41; the Nez Percés, vi, p. 340, note 145; the Blackfeet, v, p. 225, note 120; also our volume xxiii, pp. 95-122.— ED.

abandonment of the helpless infant — the capricious discarding of wife and children — the wanton effusion of human blood — are no longer known amongst them. Our feelings are not outraged by the brutal practice, heretofore so commonly witnessed, of a father considering a horse a fair exchange for his daughter; the justice of allowing the young Indian maiden to choose her future partner for life is now universally allowed; — the requisite care of their offspring is regarded in its proper light, as a Christian duty; — attention is paid to the wants of the sick; — changes of treatment, with the remedies administered according to our advice, have probably been the means, under Providence, of rescuing many from premature death. The long-cherished vindictive feelings which so frequently led to depopulating wars, are now supplanted by a Christian sense of justice, which, if unfortunately compelled to take up arms, does so only to repel unjust aggression or defend their inherent rights, but always with the fullest confidence in the protecting arm of Heaven.

Indeed their unbounded confidence in the God of battle, is well rewarded; a truth which the [293] enemies of the Flat-Heads invariably acknowledge. "The medicine of the Black-gowns," (an expression synonymous with the true religion,) "is," say they, "the strongest of all." Did time permit, I could adduce almost innumerable instances to confirm the belief universally entertained here, that Almighty God visibly protects them in the wars they are compelled to wage with the hostile tribes. A few of these, for the authenticity of which I can vouch, may suffice for the present.

In 1840, when threatened by a formidable band of Black-Feet, amounting to nearly eight hundred warriors, the Flat-Heads and Pends-d'Oreilles, scarcely numbering

sixty, betook themselves to prayer, imploring the aid of Heaven, which alone could save them in the unequal contest. Confident of success, they rose from their knees in the presence of their enemies, and engaged the overwhelming odds against them. The battle lasted five days. The Black-Feet were defeated, leaving eighty warriors dead upon the field; while the Flat-Heads and Pends-d'Oreilles sustained a loss of only one man; who, however, survived the battle four months, and had the happiness of receiving baptism the day before his death.

[294] In 1842, four Pends-d'Oreilles and a Pointed Heart were met and immediately attacked by a party of Black-Feet. At the first onset, the Black-Feet had to deplore the loss of their chief. Aroused by the noise of the musketry, the camp of the Pends-d'Oreilles rushed to the assistance of their companions, and without losing a single man, completely routed the enemy. Their escape is the more remarkable, as rushing into the entrenchments of the Black-Feet, they received a volley of shot poured in upon them by the enemy.

The Flat-Heads were again attacked, during the winter hunt of 1845, by a party of the Banax, which, though outnumbering them nearly three times, they soon put to flight, with the loss of three of the Banax party. The Flat-Heads acknowledge that the Banax are the bravest of their enemies; yet this did not deter them, though but seven in number, from fighting a whole village of the latter, that had rashly violated the rights of hospitality.

During the summer hunt of the same year, the united camp of Flat-Heads and Pends-d'Oreilles, when threatened, hesitated not a moment to engage with a band of Black-Feet four times their number. The latter, fearing the "medicine [295] of the Black-gowns," skulked around their enemies, avoiding an open fight. The former perceiving

*Camp d'Al*

this, pretended flight, in order to draw the Black-Foot into the open plain: the snare succeeded; and the Flat-Heads and Pends-d'Oreilles suddenly wheeling, attacked and repulsed them with considerable loss, driving the enemy before them in hot pursuit, as they would a herd of buffaloes. Twenty-three Black-Foot warriors lay dead on the field, after the engagement, while the Pends-d'Oreilles lost but three, and the Flat-Heads only one.

I shall close these sketches of Indian warfare, so remarkably evincing, as they do, the special protection of Heaven, with an account of an engagement which, as it was the occasion of my first interview with the Black-Foot, and by its consequence contributed much towards my favourable reception among them, will not, I trust, prove entirely devoid of interest, if given a little more in detail.

In 1846, while engaged in one of these hunting excursions, the camp of the Flat-Heads was reinforced by thirty lodges of the Nez-percés, and a dozen lodges of the Black-Foot at their own solicitation. The Flat-Heads encamped in the neighbourhood of the Crows,<sup>191</sup> purposely to renew [296] the terms of peace, if the latter felt so disposed. The Crows, perceiving in the united camp, the Nez-Percés and Black-Foot, with whom they were at war, and knowing their own superiority both in numbers and bodily strength, (they are the most robust of the Indian tribes) rushed into it like a torrent, evidently more anxious to provoke a contest than to make overtures of peace. The calm remonstrances of the Flat-Heads, and the wise admonitions of their own chief, were lost upon the now almost infuriated mutinous band of the Crows.

If the threatened outbreak had occurred at that moment, it is probable that the whole united camp would have been massacred in the hand-fight, for which evidently

<sup>191</sup> For the Crows see our volume v, p. 226, note 121.—ED.



the Crows came prepared, with loaded guns and other destructive weapons, while the Flat-Heads and the others were totally unprovided. At this critical juncture, fortunately, indeed I may say providentially, my interpreter Gabriel, and a Pend-d'Oreille named Charles, forced their way breathless into the disordered camp, and announced the arrival of the *Black-gown* who had visited them four years ago. The alarming scene they witnessed was indeed what they had expected for as we travelled to overtake the Flat-Head [297] camp at the place designed for their interview with the Crows, we perceived from the marks of their daily encampments, that some Black-Feet and Pends-d'Oreilles were with the Flat-Heads; we accordingly feared a collision would result from the interview. I therefore despatched with all possible speed, Gabriel and Charles, to announce my arrival. Well did they execute the commission—they rode almost at full gallop during a whole day and night, performing in this short period a journey which occupied the camp fourteen days. This intelligence roused the Crow chiefs to an energetic exercise of their authority. They now seized the first missiles at hand, and enforced the weight of their arguments upon their mutinous subjects, as long as there was left in the united camp the back of a Crow on which to inflict punishment. This forced separation, though it may have checked the present ebullition, could not be of long duration. It needed but a spark to rekindle their hostile dispositions into open war. The next day, as if to provoke a rupture, the disaffected Crows stole thirty horses from the Flat-Heads. Two innocent persons were unfortunately charged with the crime, and punished. The mistake being discovered, the *amende honorable* was [298] made, but to no purpose. The Flat-Heads, aware of their dangerous position, employed the interval in

fortifying their camp, stationing their women and children in a place of safety, and arming themselves for the contest. An immense cloud of dust in the neighborhood of the Crow camp at ten o'clock, announced the expected attack. On they came, with the impetuosity of an avalanche, until within musket shot of the advanced guard of the allied camp, who had just risen to their feet to listen to a few words addressed them by their chief, Stiettietlotso, and to meet the foe. "My friends," said Moses, (the name I gave him in baptism) "if it be the will of God, we shall conquer — if it be not his will, let us humbly submit to whatever it shall please his goodness to send us. Some of us must expect to fall in this contest: if there be any one here unprepared to die, let him retire; in the meanwhile let us constantly keep Him in mind." He had scarcely finished speaking, when the fire of the enemy was returned by his band, with such terrible effect as to make them shift their mode of attack into another, extremely fatiguing to their horses. After the battle had raged for some time in this way, Victor, the grand chief of the Flat-Heads,<sup>102</sup> [299] perceiving the embarrassed position of the enemy, cried out: "Now, my men, mount your best horses, and charge them." The manœuvre was successful. The Crows fled in great disorder, the Flat-Heads abandoning the pursuit only at sun-down, when they had driven the enemy two miles from their camp.

Fourteen warriors of the Crows fell in the engagement, and nine were severely wounded, as we subsequently learned from three Black-Foot prisoners, who availed themselves of their capturers' defeat to recover their liberty.

<sup>102</sup> For Victor see our volume xxvii, p. 251, note 126. Governor Isaac Stevens said of him in 1853: "We have to-day seen a good deal of Victor in our camp, the Flathead chief, celebrated in the book of De Smet. He appears to be simple-minded, but rather wanting in energy, which might, however, be developed in an emergency."— 35 Cong., 2 sess., *Senate Docs.*, vol. 18, p. 109.— ED.

On the part of the allied camp, only one was killed, the son of a Nez-Percé chief, who fell by the hand of a Crow chief, in so cowardly a manner, that the indignation of the allied camp was at once raised into immediate action — it was in fact, the first shot fired and the first blood drawn on either side; the boy was yet quite a child. Besides this loss, though the engagement lasted for several hours, only three were wounded, two of them so slightly that by application of the remedies I brought with me, they recovered in a short time; the third died a few days after my arrival in the camp.

This defeat was the more mortifying to the Crows, as they had been continually boasting [300] of their superior prowess in war, and taunting their enemies with the most insulting, opprobrious epithets. They had besides, forcibly and most unjustly drawn on the engagement.

Indeed, I look upon the miraculous escape of our Christian warriors, in this fierce contest, as further evidence of the peculiar protection of Heaven; especially when I consider the numerous instances of individual bravery, perhaps I should say reckless daring, displayed on the part of the allied camp. The son of a Flat-Head chief named Raphael, quite a youth, burning to engage in the contest, requested his father to let him have his best horse. To this the father reluctantly consented, as the boy had been rather weak from sickness. When mounted, off he bounded like an arrow from the bow, and the superior mettle of his steed soon brought him close upon the heels of a large Crow chief, who, turning his head round to notice his pursuer, pulled up his horse to punish the temerity of the boy, at the same time bending to escape the arrow then levelled at him. The boy must have shot the arrow with enormous force, for it entered under the lower left rib, the barb passing out under the right shoulder, leaving nothing

but the feathers to be seen where it entered. [301] The chief fell dead. In an instant a volley was poured in upon the boy — his horse fell perfectly riddled, with the rider under him.— He was stunned by the fall, and lay to all appearance dead. According to the custom of the Indians, of inflicting a heavy blow upon the dead body of their enemy, he received while in this position, a severe stroke from each individual of the several bands of Crows that passed him.— He was taken up half dead, by his own tribe, when they passed in pursuit of the enemy. The ardour and impetuosity of the young man belonging to the Flat-Head camp amazed the oldest warriors present, and formed the theme of universal admiration, as well as the dread of their enemies. Even the women of the Flat-Heads mingled in the fray. One, the mother of seven children, conducted her own sons into the battle-field. Having perceived that the horse of her eldest son was breaking down in a single combat with a Crow, she threw herself between the combatants, and with a knife put the Crow to flight. Another, a young woman perceiving that the quivers of her party were nearly exhausted, coolly collected, amidst a shower of arrows, those that lay scattered around her, and brought them to replenish the [302] nearly exhausted store. The celebrated Mary Quille, already distinguished in numerous battles, pursued, with axe in hand, a Crow, and having failed to come up with him, returned, saying: "I thought that these great talkers were men. I was mistaken: it is not worth while even for women to attempt to chase them."

The little party of Black-Feet, animated by a spirit of revenge, for the loss of half their tribe, massacred the preceding year by the Crows, and probably influenced by a feeling of their safety while they fought in company with the Flat-Head Christians, did signal service in the combat.



Insula or Red Feather (Michel),  
Great Chief and Brave  
among the Flat-heads





In the meantime, Gabriel and Charles, fearing the threatened outbreak, immediately started back to meet me and hasten my arrival, my presence being considered necessary to prevent the effusion of blood. I arrived at the Flat-Head camp the day after the battle. I found everything ready to repel a second attack, should that be attempted. I immediately sent an express to the Crows, to announce my arrival, and at the same time, to convey to them the great desire I had to see them, especially for the purpose of effecting a reconciliation between the [303] contending parties. But it appeared that after having buried their dead, they retreated precipitately; so that no account of their destination could be had. My express told me that there must have been excessive grief in the camp of the Crows, as the usual marks of it could be traced in every direction, such as the dissevered joints of fingers, and the numerous stains of blood, caused by the wounds which the parents of the deceased inflict upon themselves on such occasions.

Shortly after my arrival, the Black-Foot came in a body to my lodge, to express in a manner truly eloquent, their admiration of the Flat-Heads, with whom in future they desired to live on terms of the closest friendship. "To their prayers," said they, "must this extraordinary victory be attributed. While the battle lasted, we saw their old men, their women, and children, on their knees, imploring the aid of Heaven; the Flat-Heads did not lose a single man — one only fell, a young Nez-Percé, and another mortally wounded. But the Nez-Percés did not pray. We prayed morning and evening with the Flat-Heads, and heard the instructions of the chiefs." They then begged of me in their own affecting way, to take pity on them and be [304] charitable to them: they now determined to hear the words of the Great Manitou of the whites, and

to follow the course which the Redeemer had marked out on earth. Having addressed them on the nature of the life they had proposed to adopt, they all without exception presented their children for baptism, to the number of eighty.

The day after this sacred ceremony, they called on me, requesting to be allowed to express in their own way, the excess of joy which they felt on account of this two-fold victory. On returning from the late field of battle, the warriors, at the head of whom was a young chief, chanted songs of triumph, accompanied with the beating of drums; at each beat, they sent forth a wild and piercing shout; then followed the song, and so on alternately;—wild as the music was, it was not without harmony. It continued thus, during almost the whole of our route. We marched along the right bank of the Yellow-Stone River, having on our left a chain of mountains resembling those old portals to which history has given the name of “ancient chivalry.”<sup>193</sup> We had scarcely arrived at the encampment, when the Black-Foot commenced, under the shade of a beautiful cluster of pines, their [305] arrangements for a dance, insisting, at the same time, upon showing the Black-gowns how highly they valued their presence among them, and how gratified they would be to have them witness this display. There was, indeed, nothing in it that could give occasion to offended modesty to turn aside and blush. I need not tell you it was not the polka, the waltz, or anything resembling the dances of modern civilized life. The women alone figure in it, old and young; from the youngest child capable of walking, to the oldest matron present. Among them I have seen

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<sup>193</sup> The party were marching up the Yellowstone along its southern bank, to their left being the Snow Mountains, which extend just north of Yellowstone National Park.—Ed.



Great Buffalo Hunt — View of Muscle-Shell Mountains  
(See Letter 24)



several old women upwards of eighty years, whose feeble limbs required the aid of a staff in their movements through the dance. Almost all appeared in the best costume of the warriors, which, however, was worn over their own dress, a sort of tunic they always wear, and which contributed also not a little to the modesty of their appearance. Some carried the arms that had done most execution in battle, but the greater part held a green bough in the hand. In proportion as the dresses increase in singularity, the colors in variety, and the jingling of the bells in sound, in the same degree is the effect upon the rude spectator heightened. The whole figure is surmounted by [306] a casket of plumes, which by the regular movements of the individual is made to harmonize with the song, and seems to add much gracefulness to the whole scene. To lose nothing of so grand a spectacle, the Indians mount their horses, or climb the neighboring trees. The dance itself consists of a little jump, more or less lively, according to the beat of the drum. This is beaten only by the men, and all unite in the song. To break the monotony, or lend some new interest to the scene, occasionally a sudden, piercing scream is added. If the dance languishes, haranguers and those most skilful in grimaces, come to its aid. As in jumping the dancers tend towards a common centre, it often happens that the ranks become too close, then they fall back in good order to form a large circle, and commence anew in better style.

After the dance, followed the presentation of the calumet. It is borne by the wife of the chief, accompanied by two other women, on the breast of one of whom rests the head of the pipe, and upon that of the other, the stem handsomely adorned with feathers. The most distinguished personage of the nation precedes the calumet bearers, and conducts

them around the circle of dancers. The object, probably of the [307] last part of the ceremony, the termination of the rejoicings, is to indicate, that the best fruit of the victory they celebrate is the peace which follows. To establish this peace upon a better foundation, is a thought constantly uppermost in my mind. May God grant that our efforts to plant the crop of peace among these wild children of the forest, be not unavailing; I earnestly recommend these poor souls to the prayers of the faithful.

Having thus, more fully perhaps than the limits of a single letter would seem to justify, redeemed the promise given in my last, of recounting some of the advantages, spiritual and temporal, which the Flat-Heads enjoy, it may now be proper to resume the course of events up to the present date. On the 16th of August, we left St. Mary's by a mountain gap, called the "Devil's gate," a name which it has probably received from the fact of its forming the principal entrance of the marauding parties of the Black-Foot.<sup>194</sup> We encamped the first night, at the foot of the Black-Foot forks. Innumerable rivulets, and several beautiful lakes contribute largely to this river. Towards its head, to the north-east, there is an easy pass for cars and wagons.<sup>195</sup> The valley we ascended, is watered [308] by a beautiful stream called the Cart River. It was through this valley we wound our way in former days, with all our baggage, to the spot where St. Mary's now stands.<sup>196</sup> We crossed the mountains in the vicinity

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<sup>194</sup> For Hell Gate (Devil's Gate) see our volume xxvii, p. 269, note 139.—ED.

<sup>195</sup> The foot of the Blackfoot forks is the mouth of Big Blackfoot River, which rises in the main range of the Rockies and flows west for about seventy-five miles into Hellgate River, about five miles above the gorge called by that name. Up this stream is the "road that leads to the buffalo," going over Lewis and Clark Pass—the route which Captain Lewis took on his return journey in 1806.—ED.

<sup>196</sup> Leaving to the left the Big Blackfoot River, and its easy pass across the mountains, De Smet continued up Hellgate River and its upper waters, Deer



of the Arrowstone fork, another easy pass, and descended a tributary of the Jefferson as far as its outlet, through rather a wild, broken, and mountainous country, with here and there an extensive, open plain, the ordinary resort of innumerable herds of buffalo.<sup>197</sup> The seventh day found us encamped in the immense plain through which the forks of the Missouri diverge, ascending to the source at the very top of the main chain of the Rocky Mountains.<sup>198</sup> In travelling through these wilds, great care is to be had in order to avoid the sudden attack of some of those straggling war-parties that infest this neighborhood purposely to search for scalps, plunder, and the fame of some daring exploit. We halted every evening for a few hours, to take a bite, as the trapper would say, and to give some food and rest to our animals. When it was quite dark, we would kindle a brisk fire as if to last until morning; then under cover of the night, proceed on our journey for about ten miles, to some unsuspected place, thus eluding [309] our enemies, should any have followed in our track, or be lurking in the neighborhood, awaiting the midnight hour to execute their murderous designs. From the three forks we went easterly, crossing by an easy pass the mountain chain which separates the head waters of the Missouri from the Yellow-Stone River,

Lodge River (called by him Cart River). See our volume xxvii, p. 253, note 130, which describes the journey made by De Smet in 1841.—ED.

<sup>197</sup> No stream named "Arrowstone" is now charted. De Smet passed from the waters of the Columbia to those of the Missouri, by one of the numerous low and easy gaps between Mullen's on the north and Deer Lodge on the south. Probably the party went over Cottonwood (or Peterson) Pass, leading from Deer Lodge County into Jefferson, coming out upon Boulder River, which empties into the Jefferson at Jefferson Island; or else they followed the Silverbow route past the present Butte, and proceeded by Big Pipestone Creek to the Jefferson—a route now used by the Montana railways. All these were well-worn Indian trails.—ED.

<sup>198</sup> For a brief description of the Three Forks of the Missouri see our volume xxiii, p. 138, note 114.—ED.

a distance of about forty miles.<sup>199</sup> We followed in the track of the Flat-Head camp for several days, when I sent Gabriel, my interpreter, with a Pend-d'Oreille Indian in advance to discover what direction the camp had taken, and to bring back speedy news regarding their movements; and also to learn the dispositions of the Crows, whom I designed to visit. Four days later I was met by a few Flat-Heads on their way to find me, when I was apprised of the treachery of the Crows, and the severe chastisement they had so deservedly received. I travelled the whole of that night, and arrived next day in the allied camp, as I have already informed you. Having failed to obtain the desired interview with the Crows, our attention will be now turned towards the Black-Foots, with whose favorable disposition to receive the gospel you are already acquainted. The result of this determination will form the subject of my next [310] letter. I recommend myself to God in your prayers.

I remain, with sentiments of profound respect and esteem, reverend, dear father, your very humble servant and brother in Christ,

*P. J. De Smet, S. J.*

No. XXIV

A. M. D. G.

St. Louis University, January 1st, 1847.

VERY REV. AND DEAR FATHER PROVINCIAL,— You are already acquainted with our determination to accompany the Black-Foots in returning to their country. In the sequel of this letter you will learn, with pleasure, how far Almighty God has blessed our humble efforts in carry-

<sup>199</sup> See De Smet's description of this route on his previous journey (1841), in his *Letters*, our volume xxvii, p. 177, note 50.—ED.

ing this resolution into effect. After the battle, described in my letter from the Yellow-Stone camp, the Crows, it appears, fled to the Wind River Mountains, determined, however, to avenge themselves on the Black-Feet, whom they now designed to follow into their own country.<sup>200</sup> The latter, probably through fear of this assault, resolved to remain with the Flat-Head camp, until it reached the head waters of the Muscle-shell River. In leaving the Yellow-Stone our direction lay towards the north, [312] through a broken and undulating, dry and woodless country, destitute of any water fit to drink — stagnant pools of brackish water being the only kind found here to satiate the thirst.<sup>201</sup> Only a few straggling bulls were seen or killed, scarcely sufficient, indeed, to supply the wants of our numerous camp. The great variety of matter incidental to this journey with the united Indian camp, will appear, perhaps, more satisfactory if given in the same order in which it was entered in my diary; I therefore present you with an extract from it:—

8th Sept., 1846. The elements of discord existing between the Nez-Percés and Black-Feet, there is every appearance of an open rupture. The Nez-Percés being evidently in the wrong, the Flat-Heads, following our example, endeavor to convince them of the impropriety of their conduct; but to no purpose, the principal men among them refusing, for the second time, to smoke the calumet of peace.

9th. Towards night a touching incident occurred in our lodge. A Nez-Percé chief, who declares himself

<sup>200</sup> For the Wind River Mountains see our volume xxi, p. 134, note 35.—ED.

<sup>201</sup> The route lay almost directly north from the Yellowstone, along the valley of what is now Shield's River (named by Lewis and Clark for one of their party), toward the sources of the Musselshell, the largest — with the exception of the Yellowstone — southern tributary of the Missouri. See our volume xxiii, p. 58, note 33.—ED.

our friend, entered, accompanied by three Black-Feet, a warrior, an interpreter, and a young man about twenty years of age. This youth, when about one year old, lost [313] both his parents; his mother, a captive among the Black-Feet, died the first days of her captivity; his father, whose country is far distant from the Black-Feet, is altogether lost to him. The poor orphan became the adopted child of a Black-Foot woman, who brought him up as she would her own offspring. The adopted son grew up, imbibing all the notions and customs of his new friends, knowing no other relations than those around him. To-day, the woman whom he believed to be his real mother, declared to him that she was not; and that his father, whom he had not seen since he was one year old, was now sitting beside him. "Who is my father?" he anxiously enquired. "There," said the woman, pointing to the Nez-Percé chief, who entered the lodge with him. The doubts of the father were soon removed, as he hastily stripped the youth's garments from his back, and there discovered the mark of a burn received in the parental lodge while yet an infant. The sudden burst of feeling elicited from these children of nature at this unexpected meeting, can be better imagined than described. The chief has no grown children, he is therefore the more eloquent in endeavoring to persuade his son to return to his native country, presenting him, at [314] the same time, with one of the best and most beautiful of his steeds. I joined to the entreaties of the father, the strongest motives I could urge. The son, whose heart is divided between nature and grace, begged to be allowed to bid farewell to the companions and friends of his youth, who were now absent — he could not, he declared, thus abruptly leave her who, with motherly care and anxiety, had watched over him so many years, and whom he had always so tenderly

loved, and looked upon as his mother. "Now that the Black-gowns are with us," he said, "I desire to be of the happy number of those who are about to introduce them to my friends, and to listen to the words of the Great Spirit, whom they have come to announce. After that, but not before, shall I follow my father."

10th. The Nez-Percés announce their determination of leaving the united camp. The Flat-Heads, who dread more the presence of a friend capable of injuring their souls, than that of an enemy who can only hurt the body, are excessively rejoiced at this announcement. The Black-Feet also are highly pleased to see them go. The separation took place about 8 o'clock; but they had gone only a short distance from the [315] camp, when, fearing an attack from the Crows, they rejoined the main body, determined to remain as long as the great hunt shall last. To avoid the outbreak, evidently threatened by the ill-will of the Nez-Percé, the Black-Feet have resolved to leave the camp on the morrow. This day I baptized a Nez-Percé, who had been shot in the late battle with the Crows — he cannot survive much longer.

11th. Farewell to the Flat-Heads. All came to shake hands with us, the grief of their hearts was depicted in their countenances; we all perceived how deeply they felt the separation. A great number of their cavaliers accompany us for a considerable distance; six go as far as our encampment, not less than twenty-five miles.

Our course lay through an extensive level plain, at the very base of the Muscle-shell mountains.<sup>202</sup> These rise abruptly from the plain around, resembling broken, elevated islands in the midst of the ocean, and their tops tufted with a heavy growth of cedar and pine. While

<sup>202</sup> Probably the Elk Mountains, lying between the two forks of the Mussel-shell in Meagher County, Montana.— Ed.

admiring the singular appearance of the scenery, my attention is called off to a very distressing accident. An old Indian is seen falling from his horse, receiving in the fall a severe wound between his eyes; he remains senseless, all efforts [316] to revive him are fruitless. It was the old Black-Foot chief, NICHOLAS, whom I baptized five years ago; he acted, ever since, the part of a most effective missionary, in preparing the way for the introduction of the gospel among his tribe.<sup>203</sup> To-day he entered what he called his own country, chanting hymns of praise and thanksgiving in the happy anticipation of soon presenting us to his brethren. He dies! not even a sigh escapes him. Oh, how profound are the designs of God. Happily he leaves a son worthy of so excellent a sire. His attachment to religion equals that of his father. Having resided several years among the Flat-Heads, he has acquired a perfect knowledge of their language — acting in the capacity of interpreter, he has already rendered me considerable assistance. Notwithstanding his great grief, he performs the last sad offices near the tomb of his father with the composure and firmness of a Christian. It is customary among the Black-Foots to express their grief by wailings and lacerations of the body, calculated only to afflict those around, though intended by them as a mark of respect towards the lamented dead. The son of NICHOLAS, himself a chief and a great brave, knowing the Christian practice, [317] passes the night in prayer, with his wife and children, near the funeral couch of his father. His friends and brother, Pegans<sup>204</sup> (pagan in name and in fact), would now and then gather around him, kneeling

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<sup>203</sup> For the previous relations of De Smet with this chief see his *Letters* in our volume xxvii, pp. 317, 352.—ED.

<sup>204</sup> For the Piegan, one division of the Blackfeet, see Maximilian's *Travels* in our volume xxiii, pp. 95-97.—ED.





Announcement of the Discovery of Buffalos  
(See Letter 2nd)



beside the mourner, pour forth, Christian-like, many a pious ejaculation on behalf of their deceased chieftain. The remains of the venerable chief were placed in the grave by the hands of his own son, and over his tomb the emblem of salvation was raised — the cross of the Saviour, whose words were now for the first time announced to the lonely tribes of this long-benighted wilderness. At the very moment the last prayers of the funeral service were uttered, "May he rest in peace," a busy stir breaks the death-like silence of the surrounding crowd of Indians. A Flat-Head approached in full gallop, announcing the pleasing intelligence that two Black-Foots had reached their camp, and informed them that the tribe of NICHOLAS was within two days march of us.

12th. The very evening of the day on which NICHOLAS was interred, immense herds of buffalo are seen in the neighborhood of the camp. All are preparing for the chase — hunters throwing the lasso over their buffalo horses, already prancing and capering for a race — all ready to [318] start; but before they separate, they halt for a moment, and, in imitation of the Flat-Heads, all are seen on their knees to beg of Almighty God their daily bread; when again mounted, off they bound at full speed, each for one, two, or three fat cows, according to the strength of his favorite steed. The supper was abundant in every lodge, regiments of steaks were paraded before all the fires. My fire was encircled with tongues, or other dainty dishes reserved for the Black-gown; and all who visited our lodge were of course invited to partake of the superabundant supply. Among my visitors, one in particular distinguished himself by his originality and good sense — his words were accompanied with expressive signs, which rendered his conversation very agreeable; he related to me what he observed while in the Flat-Head camp:—

"When we first arrived," said he, "we had abundance of provisions with us, while the Flat-Heads and Nez-Percés were fasting; we were visited, and all partook of what we had. The Flat-Head differed from the Nez-Percés; the former prayed before he ate, the latter did not. On the Lord's-day, the Flat-Heads remained quiet in the lodges, they frequently prayed, and spoke to us words of the Great Spirit to make us good; but [319] the Nez-Percés, painted, and proud of their feathers, were seen going here and there, more for evil than good, without reserve, before our young people. But then came the battle with the Crows, and the Nez-Percés, though the least brave of us all, and the least exposed, have had to weep over the loss of one of their men, and another is dying of his wounds. This made me believe the words I had heard the Flat-Head say, 'that the Great Spirit is good to the good, but that he can find the wicked at pleasure to punish them as they may deserve.' "

The wonderful success of the Flat-Heads in the different wars they have been compelled to wage, has confirmed their enemies in the persuasion entertained for some years, that the medicine of the Black-gowns is stronger than their own. Two Indians of the Pegan camp have just arrived, apprising us of their approach.

13th. Sunday.—We are obliged to move camp;—every dry stick had been burned where we passed the night, and the rain has rendered the only other substitute for fuel, buffalo dung, unfit for use;—the rain which was falling as we travelled, changed into sleet and hail. After a long day's march we encamp for the night, in a beautiful cotton grove, on the margin of the Judith river.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> For this stream see our volume xxiii, p. 70, note 51. The camp was probably upon one of the western affluents of the Judith, on the eastern edge of the Little Belt Mountains.—ED.



Chief reports to his Camp that Buffalos are in sight  
(See Letter 3rd)





[320] The bad weather prevented the re-union of the two camps; it will be so much the more remarkable, as to-morrow will be the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. The chief enquires, if it would please us to see the Black-Foot manifest their joy in their own way, that is, by painting, singing and dancing; the answer was: "Do the best you can to show your friends that you are pleased." We learn by an express, just arrived, that the BIG LAKE, the great chief of the Pegans, harangued his people, exhorting them to behave orderly, and to listen with attention to all that the Fathers would say to them. He is accompanied by the great Tail-Bearer, a kind of orator, or aid-de-camp to the chief. His tail, composed of buffalo and horse-hair, is about seven or eight feet long, and instead of wearing it behind, according to the usual fashion, it is fastened above his forehead, and there formed into a spiral coil, resembling a rhinoceros' horn. Such a tail, among the Black-Foot, is a mark of great distinction and bravery — in all probability, the longer the tail, the braver the person.

14th. An agreeable disappointment. The Flat-Head camp, from which we separated four days ago, is only about ten miles from us. They sent an invitation to the Big Lake, desiring, at the same time, to trade with him on friendly [321] terms. Opinions are divided among the people of the Big Lake. The chief is for postponing the trade until the meeting with the Black-gowns takes place; the Tail-Bearer gives the preference to trade. The chief's voice prevails. An Indian from the camp arrives about ten o'clock, to herald their approach; all the horses are immediately saddled, and the two Black-gowns, at the head of a numerous band of cavaliers, forming one extensive line, in single file, proceed through a beautiful open plain, the air resounding with songs of triumphal

joy. We are soon in sight of each other — a loud discharge from all the guns was the signal to dismount, when the Big-Lake and Tail-Bearer, followed by the whole tribe, walked up to give us a warm and affectionate shake of the hand. Smoking came next; and after the friendly pipe had passed from mouth to mouth, and had made several rounds, they communicate to each other the news since parting. I made to them my preparatory address, to dispose their minds and hearts to listen with attention to the word of God. To this appeal they responded with a loud and cheerful expression of the satisfaction they felt in listening to the Black-gown. We had scarcely introduced our new friends into the [322] camp, before the Flat-Heads and Nez-Percés were seen approaching. Their meeting was still more joyful and cordial than the one we had just witnessed among the people of the Big-Lake. This is not astonishing, when you know them; the savage is naturally reserved towards men he does not know. The candid, open ways of acting which distinguish our neophytes soon communicate themselves to the Black-Foot, and before the sun went down, Black-Foot, Flat-Heads, young and old, all show equal pleasure to find us, on such an occasion, in the midst of them.

After evening prayers were said in the Black-Foot and Flat-Head languages, I addressed to them a short discourse on the happy re-union and peaceful disposition that now existed between the two nations. What a pleasing sight! What a consoling triumph for religion, to behold those warriors, whose deep-scarred faces told of the many bloody battles they had had together,—who could never meet before but with feelings of deadly enmity, thirsting for each other's blood,—now bending the knee before their common Father in prayer, as with one heart, and listening with delight to the words of the peaceful



The Chief at the head of his Hunters



Redeemer. The chiefs and the principal [323] men of both nations passed the evening in my lodge. VICTOR, the great Flat-Head chief, gains the good-will of all — charms everybody by the suavity and dignified simplicity of his manners. He relates some of his exploits, not indeed to appear conspicuous, as is evident from the modest and simple way in which he speaks, but to make them fully sensible of the protection which the Great Spirit extends to those who are devoted to His holy cause. The Black-Feet who were engaged in the late battle with the Crows, confirm the statements of Victor, and recount many edifying circumstances which they had witnessed in the Flat-Head camp. The making of the sign of the cross was highly extolled, as a certain sign of victory to those who had already given their hearts to the true God. It is truly to-day the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

15th. The Octave of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin. The new disciples of the cross assist at a solemn Mass, sung in the open plain, under the canopy of green boughs, to beg for the blessings of God upon this wilderness and its wandering tribes, and unite them in the bond of peace. Flat-Heads, Nez-Percés, Pegans, Blood Indians, Gros-Ventres and Black-Feet,<sup>206</sup> numbering [324] about two thousand, all surround the altar of the living God, on which "the clean oblation is offered," in their behalf. It is a thing unheard of, that among so many different savage nations, hitherto so inimical to one another, unanimity and joy, such as we now witness, should exist,—it appears as if their ancient deadly feuds had been long since buried in oblivion; and this is the more remarkable

<sup>206</sup> For the Blood Indians, a branch of the Blackfoot tribe, consult our volume xxiii, pp. 95-97, especially note 84. The Grosventres of the Prairie, likewise called Fall Indians, are noted in our volume vi, p. 371, note 183; also our volume xxiii, pp. 75, 76. By the Blackfeet — his final category — De Smet intends that branch of the tribe known as Siksekai, or Blackfeet proper. See Maximilian's description in our volume xxiii, pp 95, 96. — ED.

in an Indian who, it is well known, cherishes feelings of revenge for many years. How long will this last? May Heaven strengthen their present good-will, and grant them perseverance. Mention is already made of baptizing all the Pegan children, but the ceremony is postponed on account of the general rejoicing, and the affairs of business that now occupy the camp.

16th. The engaging simplicity and cordiality of the Flat-Head chiefs have gained them the affections of all the principal men of the Black-Foot tribe,—conduct the more remarkable, when contrasted with the turbulent disposition of the Nez-Percés, who are kept in check only by the presence of the Flat-Heads. At this second separation, they came again to renew their affection towards us. The Flat-Head chiefs remain last in the camp to see everything pass off [325] orderly and amicably. In the evening the Black-Foot assemble around our fire, where the first canticle is composed in their language; the subject of the composition is the consecration of their persons to the “Supreme Ruler of all things.” Apistotokie Nina, Pikanniai tokanakos akos pemmoki tzagkoma Achziewa ziekamolos.

17th. Nothing very remarkable took place. We received the visit of a war party of Blood Indians, the most cruel among the Black-Foot. From them we learn that their tribe will be delighted to receive a visit from us,—that our persons are considered sacred among them,—that we need apprehend no danger, and, to remove all uneasiness on this head, that sixty of their children had already received baptism at the hands of a Black-gown,<sup>207</sup> whom they met on the *Sascatchewan*, and that

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<sup>207</sup> Probably the missionary here mentioned was J. B. Thibault from Red River, who travelled extensively in the Saskatchewan territory; see note 122, *ante*, p. 231.—ED.



these children constantly wear the crosses and medals which the Black-gown gave them.

18th. News in great variety. Two Gros-Ventres have been killed by the Crows. Seven families of Pegans have been followed by a numerous band of Crees, and have probably been destroyed. A chief, just arrived, informs us that Black-Foot of different tribes are assembling in the neighborhood of Fort Lewis to receive [326] their annual supplies, and that the traders who bring up the goods are distant only three days' journey, with three large canoes (Mackinaw boats).<sup>208</sup> About two o'clock in the afternoon the camp prepares for another great hunt.

19th. Baptism was this day conferred on upwards of one hundred children and two old men, with all the usual ceremonies. To enter into a full description of these, calculated, as they are, to leave a deep and lasting impression upon the minds of all present, would be but a repetition of what has been already stated in my former letters on the like occasions.

20th. Arrival of a great war party of Blood Indians. They are returning from an expedition against the Crows, having carried off twenty-seven horses belonging to the latter. The leaders of this party, one a son, the other a brother of the great chief, exhibit towards us particular marks of friendship. The elder, who worshiped the sun and moon, has long since ceased to invoke these deities—he confirms the statement of the other party, that we shall meet with a hearty welcome among his tribe. The Black-Foot nation consists of about fourteen thousand souls, divided into six tribes, to wit: the *Pegans*, the *Surcees*, the *Blood Indians*, the *Gros-Ventres* [327] (descendants

<sup>208</sup> The trader was Charles Larpenteur, then in the employ of the American Fur Company. He left Fort Union July 8, with one keel-boat and later made a Mackinac boat en route. See his journal in Elliott Coues, *Forty Years a Fur-Trader on the Upper Missouri*, ii, pp. 237-242.—ED.

of the Rapahos), the Black-Foot (proper), and the *Little Robes*.<sup>209</sup> These last were almost entirely destroyed in 1845.

21st. A feast is given in my lodge to the new-comers. It is preceded by the baptism of a Pegan, who had been an old chief, but who, on account of age, resigned the dignity of his title in favor of his brother. He possesses the gift of speech in an eminent degree. He is daily here, repeating and commenting on the instructions given by us. He exercises over his flock a very happy influence, and it is, doubtless, owing to his exertions that the Pegans are the first among the Black-Foot tribe to manifest favorable dispositions, and they will probably be the first also to embrace and put in practice the saving truths of Christianity. He presents, in his own person, a rare exception among his people, and indeed the only instance I have met with in my intercourse with the Indians, especially in one of his age — of an Indian having lived with one and the same wife, and with her also in perfect peace and harmony. He received in baptism the united name of IGNATIUS XAVIER, the medal having that impress — which he constantly wears, to remind him of the virtues which distinguish those saints. Let us hope [328] that the first graces bestowed on this tribe may soon produce fruits of salvation to all.

22d. A day of great rejoicing — a dance. All the Indian fineries are produced, all the war-caps, adorned with eagle feathers, figure in the dance — a thousand voices join in the song — the rejoicing prolonged till evening. The common prayers have all been translated — already several know what is to be believed. May the practice

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<sup>209</sup> These tribes formed the Blackfoot confederacy, but the Sarcee (Surcees) and Grosventres belonged to different stocks. For the former see our volume xxiii, p. 90, note 77.— ED.

of good soon take deep root in their hearts. Sata, our interpreter, acts the part of an Apostle<sup>210</sup> — after each interpretation, he resumes his discourse, and speaking from the abundance of his heart, produces a powerful effect upon his audience. The word *Sata* does not differ in signification from *Satan*, and as the Indian generally receives his name from the natural disposition he manifests, we may safely conclude, when such a name is given to a Black-Foot, that the grace of God has operated most powerfully in converting this savage to what he is at present.

23d. Nothing remarkable happened, except a trial given to faith of the new catechumens. A theft of two horses was committed in the camp by a stranger, residing among the Flat-Heads. Some individuals from the western side of the [329] mountains, occasionally forget what they should be; but a few isolated misdeeds, highly disapproved of by the entire nation, show to the best advantage the good spirit that animates the great mass of them. The critical position of the robber serves in some degree as an extenuation of his guilt. He had advanced a considerable distance from the Flat-Head camp, on his way to join us about the time we should reach the Black-Foot Indians; when he was given to understand that his life was in great danger from the war parties prowling in the rear. The poor fellow did not feel much inclined to meet death in this way, and his meagre horse not being very well able to avoid the meeting, *proprio motu* he left his, in exchange for two other horses, fully equal to the task of sweeping him past the danger. These horses will, however, be returned to the owner. This is not the first instance of restitution among the Indians.

<sup>210</sup> Sata was at Fort Benton in 1847, and acted as guide to Larpenteur in the latter's effort to reach the Flathead country. Larpenteur calls him a half-breed Blackfoot and Flathead; evidently his mother was of the latter tribe. See *Forty Years a Fur-Trader*, pp. 272, 274.—ED.

Sept. 24th. The missionaries, accompanied by a great number of Indians, precede the camp on its way to Fort Lewis, now only a few miles off. I am accosted by a little Pegan chief, who invites me to smoke. He tells me that he has come to the determination of settling at the Fort an unfortunate personal difficulty between himself [330] and another chief of the Blood Indian tribe. "I am going to meet," said he, "my mortal enemy, a Blood Indian chieftain, renowned for his courage, but much more for his wicked heart. He treacherously murdered a Nez-Percé, while under my protection. I should be dishonored forever if I did not avenge this shameful act, and wash the stain from my nation in his blood. I shot the murderer in his own lodge — he did not die — his wound is healed — he awaits my arrival, resolved to kill me. I dread him not, for I also am a chief. I have heard your words, and other feelings have crept over my heart. Black-gown, hear what I am about to do: I will present to him the best horse of my band to cover his wound; if he accepts it, well and good, if not, I must kill him." I offered myself as a mediator between them, before any steps should be taken, and promised him a favorable issue, according to the conviction of my own heart; for, as I had never witnessed the spilling of one drop of human blood, I felt assured that Almighty God would spare me the painful sight on the present occasion. We continue our route. The little chief and his Pegan friends prepare their arrows and load their guns. When in sight of the Fort, two [331] Black-Foots came running up towards us, to tell the little chief that if he approached any further, or any of his people, their lives would be in danger; and they returned as they came, running to announce the arrival of the Black-gowns. The bell of the Fort is sending forth a solemn peal, to honor, as it subsequently appeared,

the arrival of the Black-gowns — a mark of respect generally paid to a priest by its inmates, who are chiefly French Canadians and Spaniards. Heedless of the admonition we had received, we proceeded to the Fort in full gallop. The gates were thrown open. We received a hearty welcome from every white man in the Fort; the bourgeois being absent, soon returned, to add by their kindness and politeness to the warm reception we had already received at the hands of their tenants.<sup>211</sup> The first compliments over, two horses were saddled for Father Point and myself, when we went over to an island formed by the waters of the Missouri, where the murderer and his band were encamped. The great neatness in the lodge of the latter, to whom I had already sent word, showed that it was prepared for our reception. We entered first, followed by our Pegan friends; then came the Blood Indians, and last of all the murderous [332] chief, with a countenance far from serene — savage vengeance visibly lurking in his breast. He shook hands only with the Black-gowns, and sat down silent and surly. I explained to him the object of my visit, and pleaded strongly for a reconciliation, declaring, at the same time, that I would not leave his lodge until I should see them reconciled. He listened with much attention, made a very appropriate reply, and in finishing, he exclaimed: "all is forgiven and forgotten. How could my heart remain angry whilst I listened to thy words?" Confidence was quickly restored in the assembly, and his short but eloquent reply showed that there was eloquence everywhere when the heart speaks. The little chief who had first spoken of reconciliation ended his remarks by an action that was really moving; stepping

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<sup>211</sup> For the term "bourgeois" see our volume xxi, p. 183, note 33. Larpenieur's journal in *Forty Years a Fur-Trader*, ii, pp. 236-243, explains why neither he nor Malcolm Clarke was at the fort when the missionary arrived.— Ed.

up to the man who had been his mortal enemy, he tenderly embraced him, and then, in addition to other gifts, presented him with a beautifully-painted robe, wrought in porcupine. The calumet of peace was cheerfully lighted, and passed around several times. Conversation became animated and friendly, and each one left the council-house with a light and glad heart, more easily felt than described. The chiefs who were present on this [333] occasion were: *Amakzikinne*, or the Big Lake; *Onistaistamik*, or ~~White~~ Bull; *Masléistamik*, or Bull-Crow; *Aiketzo*, or Grande roulette; *Sata*, or the wicked; *Akaniaki*, or the man who was beaten.

27th. Sunday, I offered up the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar, followed by an instruction on the end of man, at which all the inmates of Fort Lewis attended, together with as many Black-Foots as the large room and passage could contain. Many a tear escaped from the Canadian, the Creole, and the Spaniard, at the remembrance, no doubt, of the innocent and happy days they spent when young, in attending regularly to their religious duties. Many a pious resolution was lowly made on the present occasion, and their strict attention and devout feelings during divine service, showed that the germ of faith in them still gave promise of fructifying, however far they may have wandered from the strict line of Christian rectitude. In the afternoon I administered, with all the ceremonies, the sacrament of baptism to thirty children.

From what I have seen, I am firmly convinced of the great good a missionary establishment would produce among the Black-Foots. [334] Assuredly it is a work well worthy the zeal of an apostle: to reclaim these savages from their cruel and bloody wars; to wrest them from the soul-destroying idolatry in which they are plunged, for they are worshippers of the sun and moon: and to



teach them the consolatory truths of the Divine Redeemer of mankind, to which they seemed to listen with the utmost attention, and heartfelt satisfaction. Allow me the reflection, the ultimate fate of these fierce and lonely tribes is fixed at no distant date, unless looked to in time. What will become of them? The buffalo-field is becoming narrower from year to year, and each succeeding hunt finds the Indians in closer contact. It is highly probable that the Black-Foot plains, from the Saskatchewan to the Yellowstone, will be the last resort of the wild animals twelve years hence. Will these be sufficient to feed and clothe the hundred thousand inhabitants of these western wilds? The Crees, Black-Foot, Assiniboin, Crows, Snakes, Rick-aries, and Sioux, will then come together and fight their bloody battles on these plains, and become themselves extinct over the last buffalo-steak. Let those, who have the power and the means, look to it in time. Let some efforts be made to rescue them from the threatened [335] destruction, lest, by guilty negligence, the last drop of aboriginal blood indelibly stain the fair fame of the Spread Eagle, under whose protecting wing they are said to live. Justice makes the appeal.

After mature deliberation upon the various plans devised for the contemplated establishment, it was deemed more advisable that the Reverend Father Point should remain with the Black-Foot, and continue the instructions; while I should go to St. Louis and endeavor to procure the means necessary to establish a permanent mission among them. Accordingly, on the 28th, I took final leave of my companions, of the kind and polite gentlemen of the Fort, of all the Black-Foot then present, who ceased not, during my stay among them, to give me the most marked tokens of affectionate attachment. Our departure was honored by the Fort with a discharge of the guns, and

amidst a thousand farewells we glided down the Missouri, from a point 2850 miles above its mouth.

We left the Fort about noon, and encamped 25 miles below, near Bird Island. Next day, while passing the bluffs, on whose steep declivities numerous groups of the big-horn were browsing, we stole a march upon an old buck [336] that came to drink at the water's edge — the first of the many victims sacrificed to our necessities during this long trip. After passing the Maria and Sandy rivers, we reached the remarkable formation, the yellow sand-stone walls, on both sides of the Missouri, exhibiting most fantastic shapes and fissures — urns, of various sizes and forms — tables of every description — rostrums, surrounded by mushrooms, pillars, forts, castles, and a multitude of other figures, which, for the greater part of this, and the whole of the following day, furnished to our almost bewildered fancies ample scope for comparisons and theories.<sup>212</sup> We passed, on the 8th of October, the great Elk-horn steeple, near Porcupine Fork. I could not learn what extraordinary event this remarkable tower was intended to commemorate. Several thousand elk-horns have been here piled up, which formerly constituted, I have little doubt, the grand resort of numerous groups of these animals.<sup>213</sup> On the 11th we arrived at Fort Union, 600 miles distant from Fort Lewis, this making about 50 miles a day. Here we met with a very warm reception. We availed ourselves of the kind offer given to us of resting

<sup>212</sup> For Maria's River see our volume xxiii, p. 84, note 73. Little Sandy Creek, twenty-three miles below Maria's, rises on the western slope of Bearpaw Mountain, and flows west and then south into the Missouri. For Maximilian's description of the natural stone walls see our volume xxiii, pp. 71-83; also the representations in our atlas, volume xxv, Plates 18, 61, 68, and 74.— ED.

<sup>213</sup> For Porcupine River see our volume xxiii, p. 33, note 19. The pyramid of elks' horns is described in *ibid.*, pp. 34, 35; and pictured in our atlas, volume xxv, Plate 21. De Smet describes its later destruction by a modern vandal, in Chittenden and Richardson, *De Smet*, iv, p. 1372.— ED.

a day at the Fort; while there I baptized five children.<sup>214</sup> We left the Fort on the [337] 13th, with two companions. Large herds of buffalo were seen on both sides of the river, and bears, deer and elks appeared at every bend, so that there is little danger of suffering from want at this season. On the 16th our ardor to press forward, in spite of a strong head-wind, was suddenly cooled by a side wind, which upset the skiff and ourselves in four feet of water. We were now satisfied that we had better wait for a more favorable wind, and improve the time by drying our clothes. We started quite refreshed in the afternoon, and made up for the lost time by running sixty miles the next day. On the 17th we met six lodges of Assiniboins; they received us very kindly in their little camp,—gave us a feast and abundance of provisions. The same day we met eight Gros-Ventres, who were also exceedingly kind to us, insisting on our accepting a lot of buffalo tongues.<sup>215</sup> A favorable wind on the 18th, induced us to unfurl our sail. We were thus enabled to run about ten miles an hour, and early next day we reached Fort Berthold, where we were kindly entertained by Mr. Brugere.<sup>216</sup> The Gros-Ventres have a village here. I found but a few families;—one of the chiefs invited me to a feast. On the 20th we

<sup>214</sup> For Fort Union see our volume xxii, pp. 373-383. James Kipp, who had been at Fort Clark during Maximilian's visit, was at this time in charge of Fort Union. See biographical sketch in our volume xxii, p. 345, note 319.—ED.

<sup>215</sup> Not the Grosventres of note 206, *ante*, but the Minitaree, also called Gros-ventres (Big Bellies), for whom see our volume v, p. 113, note 76; also our volumes xxii, pp. 350, 359-363; xxiii, pp. 367-385. The Minitaree removed to Fort Berthold in 1845.—ED.

<sup>216</sup> For Fort Berthold see *ante*, p. 233, note 125. The clerk in charge was probably Jacques Brugière, a nephew of James Kipp, who for many years was at Fort Union. In 1847-48 he entered into partnership with Charles Larpenteur for a trading venture to the Flatheads, which did not prove successful. Theophile Brugière was also an American Fur Company employe, who lived and married among the Yankton Sioux, becoming later the first settler on the site of Sioux City, Iowa.—ED.

were hailed by several [338] bands of Indians, and kindly received. We proceeded, and encamped for the night near Knife river; but our fire discovered our encampment to a band of Indians.<sup>217</sup> The discovery would have been fatal to us, had I not been fortunately recognized by them; for they came armed for destruction, and took us by surprise. As soon as the two leaders knew who I was, they embraced me affectionately; our alarm was soon quieted, and we passed the evening very agreeably in their company; a good smoke, a cup of well sweetened coffee, a few humps and buffalo tongues, put them in a very good humour. They made me a solemn promise, that they would, in future, never molest a white man. They were Arikaras. The next day we breakfasted at Fort Madison, with the good and kind-hearted Mr. Des Autel.<sup>218</sup> Shortly after leaving this Fort, we passed under a scalp attached to the end of a long pole, which projected over the river. This was probably an offering to the sun, to obtain either fresh scalps or a good hunt. We were hailed by a large village of Arikaras, encamped and fortified on a point of land well timbered.<sup>219</sup> They treated us with great kindness, earnestly pressing me to accept invitations to several buffalo feasts; and as time did not admit of such delay, [339] their liberality fell little short of sinking the skiff, with the most dainty pieces of the hunt. Though late, we proceeded on our journey, principally, indeed, to avoid passing the night in feasting. Having

<sup>217</sup> For Knife River see our volume xxii, p. 357, note 333.—ED.

<sup>218</sup> This post was evidently Fort Mandan (or Clark); see our volume xxii, p. 344, note 317, also xxiii, pp. 228-236. Des Autel (D'Isotille) was clerk at Fort Mackenzie in the early forties, and aided Chardon and Harvey in the massacre at this post, which led to its abandonment, whereupon all the principals concerned were sent to lower posts. Larpenteur reports Des Autel (Des Hôtel) as being in charge of Fort Clark in 1847.—ED.

<sup>219</sup> For the Arikara at the old Mandan village see our volume xxvii, p. 150, note 19 (De Smet).—ED.

had very favorable weather during the five following days, we reached, on the 26th, the encampment of Mr. Goule, an agent in the service of the American Fur Company.<sup>220</sup> I baptized several half-breed children at this place.

Availing ourselves of the favorable weather the four following days, we kept on the river, drifting down every night, so that early on the 30th, we arrived at Fort Pierre. Mr. Picotte, of St. Louis, received us with the utmost cordiality and politeness.<sup>221</sup> He forced me to remain three days under his hospitable roof. This delay enabled me to see a great number of Sioux, and baptize fifty-four children. Meanwhile Mr. Picotte ordered a large and convenient skiff to be made, and stored it with all sorts of provisions. In all my travels, I have never met one to surpass, perhaps to equal, the overflowing kindness with which this gentleman confers a favor. I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude to him. May God bless and reward him. And, indeed, I must here add, as a token of my [340] sincere gratitude, that in all the forts of the American Fur Company, the charitable liberality and kindness of the gentlemen were unbounded.

Late on the 3d November we renewed our journey, but had not proceeded far when we found it necessary to refit our skiff, which, being quite new, leaks considerably. We landed at a large farm belonging to the company on Fleury's Island. We freely used the permission given to us, and committed great havoc among the poultry.

<sup>220</sup> According to the translation from the French given in Chittenden and Richardson, *De Smet*, ii, p. 607, the voyagers were delayed five days by adverse winds, reaching the camp, October 26, in the neighborhood of Butes au Grés (or Sandstone Buttes), not far from Bismarck, North Dakota. Henry Goulet (Goulé) afterwards resided at Sioux City, and during the Harney campaign (1856) obtained permission to construct ferries in that neighborhood. See South Dakota Department of History *Collections*, i, p. 417.—ED.

<sup>221</sup> For Fort Pierre see our volume xxii, p. 315, note 277, also pp. 317-321. For Honoré Picotte see our volume xxiv, p. 16, note 10.—ED.

On the 5th we breakfasted at Mr. Bouis' Fort, where I baptized thirteen half-breed children — the day was beautiful and we made the whole of the Grande Detour.<sup>222</sup> We arrived at Fort Look-Out, of which I found Mr. Campbell in charge.<sup>223</sup> I baptized here sixteen half-breed children. I was kindly received by a great number of Sioux. We encamped nine miles lower down at a trading post held by two Canadians, where I baptized four children. On the 10th we passed the entrance of Running-water river, a fine stream with a strong current.<sup>224</sup> Two miles above its mouth were encamped one hundred families of the unhappy and much-abused Mormons — met several Sioux about Great Island, where we encamped.<sup>225</sup> A favorable [341] wind enabled us to reach Fort Vermilion on the 13th, four hundred miles below Fort Pierre. I baptized seven half-breed children. Mr. Hamilton liberally supplied us with provisions.<sup>226</sup> On the 14th we saw a Mormon along the

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<sup>222</sup> Fleury's Island is now called Farm Island, about two and a half miles long, and the same distance below Fort Pierre. The post where De Smet tarried, known as Fort Bouis or Fort Defiance, was erected by Harvey, Primeau and Company who were acting in opposition to the American Fur Company. The trade was with the Brulé Sioux, and the post was located on the west bank of the Missouri at the mouth of Medicine Creek. It had been founded but a short time before De Smet's visit, but was soon bought out by the American Fur Company, being then abandoned.

For the Grande Detour (Big Bend) of the Missouri see our volume xxii, pp. 312, 313.—ED.

<sup>223</sup> For Fort Lookout see our volume xxii, p. 304, note 261. The bourgeois in charge was Colin Campbell, one of the best interpreters of the region, who had accompanied Joshua Pilcher on the Arikara expedition of 1823, and long served in the American Fur Company's employ. Chittenden and Richardson, *De Smet*, ii, pp. 609, 610, give the report of a council held with the Sioux at this post, concerning their conversion.—ED.

<sup>224</sup> For Running Water (Eau qui Court) River see our volume xxii, p. 291, note 252.—ED.

<sup>225</sup> Apparently Bon Homme Island, the largest in that vicinity, for which see our volume vi, p. 91, note 34.—ED.

<sup>226</sup> For Fort Vermillion see our volume xxvii, p. 153, note 22 (De Smet).

Major Joseph V. Hamilton was Indian agent at Council Bluffs, 1839-41; in



beach, who fled at our approach. We met two Canadians who had shot a fine turkey, which they gave me: in return I presented them with some coffee and sugar, rare articles in that country. A fine breeze brought us in sight of the old Council Bluffs on the 18th.<sup>227</sup> The river has made considerable changes since my former visit to this place; entirely new beds have been formed. For several hundred miles, all the forests along the south side of the river were filled with cattle belonging to the Mormons. On the 18th we passed the ancient trading post, Lisel de Cabanne's — a few miles below is the new temporary settlement of the Mormons, about ten thousand in number.<sup>228</sup> I was presented to their president, Mr. Young, a kind and polite gentleman. He pressed me very earnestly to remain a few days, an invitation which my limited time did not permit me to accept.<sup>229</sup> The persecutions and

1843 Audubon found him at Fort George, in temporary charge of the agency at that place.—ED.

<sup>227</sup> For old Council Bluffs see our volume xxii, p. 275, note 231. See also De Smet's letters on this locality in *Nebraska Historical Society Transactions*, i, pp. 42-44.—ED.

<sup>228</sup> For Cabanné and the location of his post see our volume xxii, p. 271, note 226.

For the early history of the Mormons in Missouri and Illinois, see our volumes xx, pp. 94-99 with accompanying notes; xxiv, p. 119, note 99; and xxvi, pp. 334-338.

The charter of Nauvoo, their Illinois settlement, having been revoked early in 1846, the Mormon leaders organized an emigration, and moved west through Iowa to the Missouri River. Having held a council with the neighboring Indians, they established winter quarters at what is now Florence, Nebraska, where De Smet found them. Early in the spring of 1847 a delegation was dispatched to seek a permanent home. The valley of Salt Lake was chosen, and removals thither began in 1848. In a later letter Father de Smet intimates that his account to them of the Salt Lake basin had some influence in determining the site of their future home.—ED.

<sup>229</sup> Brigham Young was born in Vermont in 1801; at the age of sixteen he removed to New York, where he became a convert to Mormonism, entering that church in 1832. Three years later he was chosen one of the twelve apostles, and in 1837 led a band of followers to Missouri. After the persecutions in that state, he aided in founding Nauvoo, Illinois, and in 1840 made a missionary trip to

sufferings endured by this unhappy people, will one day probably form a prominent part of the history [342] of the Far-west. At sun-set we encamped at Mr. Sarpy's trading post,<sup>230</sup> among the upper Potawotomies, where I met several of my old Indian friends, and among them Potogojecs, one of their chiefs, whose Indian legend of their religious traditions will form the subject of my next letter.

20th. A beautiful day—we visited our old friends in Bellevue, the good Mr. Papin<sup>231</sup> and others. We passed the Papillion, the Mosquito, and the Platte rivers, and encamped near Table Creek.<sup>232</sup>

On the 23d we arrived at St. Joseph's, the highest town in Missouri.<sup>233</sup> It is now in a most thriving and prosperous England. Upon the death of Joseph Smith, Young became the head of the church—a position maintained until his death in 1877. He guided the emigration to Salt Lake, and in 1850 was appointed governor of the territory of Utah.

De Smet's early sympathy with the Mormons, as expressed at this time and in other letters, later suffered a considerable change. See his letter of 1858 in Chittenden and Richardson, *De Smet*, iv, pp. 1407-1415.—ED.

<sup>230</sup> The post at Bellevue, for which see our volume xxii, p. 267, note 221.

Pierre Labbadie Sarpy, better known as Colonel Peter, was born in St. Louis in 1805 of a prominent French creole family. About 1822 he went to the frontier as a trader, and thereafter preferred the free life of the West to a conventional career in St. Louis. Upon the retirement of Cabanné, Sarpy became the American Fur Company's agent at Bellevue, where he autocratically ruled for many years. His Indian wife Nekomi was a woman of influence with the neighboring tribes. Colonel Sarpy aided the Mormons on their emigration and assisted in building up the new territory of Nebraska, establishing ferries, and maintaining several trading posts. He removed from Bellevue to St. Mary's, Iowa, later (1861) to Plattsmouth, where he died in 1865.—ED.

<sup>231</sup> For Laforce Papin see our volume xv, p. 143, note 44.—ED.

<sup>232</sup> For these streams see our volumes v, p. 72, note 40; and xiv, pp. 219, 221, notes 170, 173. Table Creek is a small run in Otoe County, Nebraska, at whose mouth is situated Nebraska City.—ED.

<sup>233</sup> The site of St. Joseph was early known as Blacksnake Hills, where Joseph Robidoux had a trading post—see our volumes xxii, p. 257, note 210, and xxiv, p. 121, note 102. After the Platte purchase (1836) settlers began flocking in, and in 1843 the town was platted, being named St. Joseph for its founder. By the close of the year 1846, when De Smet passed, the place had a population of nearly a thousand.—ED.

ous condition; much improved indeed since I last saw it.

28th. We arrived at West-Port,<sup>234</sup> from which I proceeded by stage to St. Louis, the termination of a trip which occupied just two months. I recommend myself to your prayers.

I remain, with sentiments of profound respect and esteem, your obedient servant and brother in Christ.

P. J. De Smet, S. J.

No. XXV

A. M. D. G.

#### LEGEND OF THE POTAWOTOMIE INDIANS

St. Louis University, January 10, 1847.

VERY REV. AND DEAR FATHER PROVINCIAL,— Agreeably to my promise, I send you the account given by the Potawotomies, residing at Council Bluffs, respecting their own origin, and the causes which gave rise to their “great medicine,” and juggling, considered by them as of the highest antiquity. Such superstitions, indeed, are found to exist among all the tribes of the American continent, differing only in the form and the accompanying ceremonies. The Nanaboojoo of the Potawotomies, the Wieska of the Objibbeways, the Wizakeshak of the Crees, the Sau-teux and the Black-Feet, the Etalapasse of the Tchinouks on the coast of the Pacific, can, among these different tribes, be traced up to the same personage.

[344] I send it *verbatim*, as it was communicated to me by Potogojecs, one of the most intelligent chiefs of the Potawotomie nation. Though fabulous, it is not entirely devoid of interest; it should excite us to offer up our

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<sup>234</sup> For the early history of Westport (Kansas City) see De Smet's *Letters*, our volume xxvii, p. 135, note 2.—ED.

prayers the more fervently to the Great Father of Light, for these poor benighted children of the forest, and beg of Him to send good and worthy laborers into this vast vineyard. Having enquired of this chief what he thought of the Great Spirit, of the Creator, and of the origin of his religion, or great medicine, he replied as follows: "I will give you a faithful account of what my tribe believes in these matters. We have not, like you, books to transmit our traditions to our children; it is the duty of the old men of the nation to instruct the young people in whatever relates to their belief, and their happiness.

"Many among us believe, that there are two Great Spirits who govern the universe, but who are constantly at war with each other. One is called the *Kchemnito*, that is, the Great Spirit, the other *Mchemnito*, or the Wicked Spirit. The first is goodness itself, and his beneficent influence is felt everywhere; but the second is wickedness personified, and does nothing but evil. Some believe that they are equally [345] powerful, and, through fear of the Wicked Spirit, offer to him their homage and adoration. Others, again, are doubtful which of them should be considered the more powerful, and accordingly endeavor to propitiate both, by offering to each an appropriate worship. The greater part, however, believe as I do, that *Kchemnito* is the first principle, the first great cause, and consequently ought to be all-powerful, and to whom alone is due all worship and adoration; and that *Mchemnito* ought to be despised and rejected!

"*Kchemnito* at first created a world, which he filled with a race of beings having nothing but the appearance of men — perverse, ungrateful, wicked dogs — that never raised their eyes to heaven to implore the assistance of the Great Spirit. Such ingratitude aroused him to anger, and he plunged the world in a great lake, where they were

all drowned. His anger thus appeased, he withdrew it from the waters, and created anew a beautiful young man, who, however, appeared very sad, and being dissatisfied with his solitary condition, grew weary of life. Kchem-nito took pity on him, and gave him, during sleep, a sister, as a companion to cheer his loneliness. When he awoke and saw [346] his sister he rejoiced exceedingly — his melancholy instantly disappeared. They spent their time in agreeable conversation and amusement, living for many years together in a state of innocence and perfect harmony, without the slightest incident to mar the happiness of their peaceful solitude.

“The young man had a dream, for the first time, which he communicated to his sister. ‘Five young men,’ said he, ‘will come this night, and rap at the door of the lodge — the Great Spirit forbids you to laugh, to look at them, or give an answer to any of the first four, but laugh, look, and speak, when the fifth presents himself.’ She acted according to his advice. When she heard the voice of the fifth, she opened the door to him, laughing at the same time very heartily; he entered immediately, and became her husband. The first of the five strangers, called Sama, (tobacco,) having received no answer, died of grief; the three others, Wapekone, (pumpkin,) Eshketamok, (water-melon,) and Kojees, (the bean,) shared the fate of their companion. Taaman, (maize,) the bridegroom, buried his four companions, and from their graves there sprung up, shortly after, pumpkins, water-melons, beans, and tobacco-plants [347] in sufficient abundance to supply their wants during the whole year, and enable them to smoke to the manitous, and in the council. From this union are descended the American Indian nations.

“A great manitou came on earth, and chose a wife from among the children of men. He had four sons at a birth;

the first born was called Nanaboojoo, the friend of the human race, the mediator between man and the Great Spirit; the second was named Chipiapoos, the man of the dead, who presides over the country of the souls; the third, Wabosso, as soon as he saw the light, fled towards the north, where he was changed into a white rabbit, and under that name is considered there as a great manitou; the fourth was Chakekenapok, the man of flint, or fire-stone. In coming into the world he caused the death of his mother.

"Nanaboojoo, having arrived at the age of manhood, resolved to avenge the death of his mother, (for among us revenge is considered honorable); he pursued Chakekenapok all over the globe. Whenever he could come within reach of his brother, he fractured some member of his body, and after several rencontres, finally destroyed him by tearing out his entrails. All [348] fragments broken from the body of this man of stone then grew up into large rocks; his entrails were changed into vines of every species, and took deep root in all the forests; the flint-stones scattered around the earth indicate where the different combats took place. Before fire was introduced among us, Nanaboojoo taught our ancestors how to form hatchets, lances, and the points of arrows, in order to assist us in killing our enemies in war, and animals for our food. Nanaboojoo and his brother, Chipiapoos, lived together retired from the rest of mankind, and were distinguished from all other beings by their superior qualities of body and mind. The manitous that dwell in the air, as well as those who inhabit the earth and the waters, envied the power of these brothers, and conspired to destroy them. Nanaboojoo discovered and eluded their snares, and warned Chipiapoos not to separate himself from him a single moment. Notwithstanding this admonition,



Chipiapoos ventured alone one day upon Lake Michigan; the manitous broke the ice, and he sank to the bottom, where they hid the body. Nanaboojoo became inconsolable when he missed his brother from his lodge; he sought him everywhere in vain, he waged war against all the manitous, [349] and precipitated an infinite number of them into the deepest abyss. He then wept, disfigured his person, and covered his head, as a sign of his grief, during six years, pronouncing from time to time, in sad and mournful tones, the name of the unhappy Chipiapoos.

“While this truce continued, the manitous consulted upon the means best calculated to appease the anger of Nanaboojoo, without, however, coming to any conclusion; when four of the oldest and wisest, who had had no hand in the death of Chipiapoos, offered to accomplish the difficult task. They built a lodge close to that of Nanaboojoo, prepared an excellent repast, and filled a calumet with the most exquisite tobacco. They journeyed in silence towards their redoubted enemy, each carrying under his arm a bag, formed of the entire skin of some animal, an otter, a lynx, or a beaver, well provided with the most precious medicines, (to which, in their superstitious practices, they attach a supernatural power). With many kind expressions, they begged that he would condescend to accompany them. He arose immediately, uncovered his head, washed himself, and followed them. When arrived at their lodge, they offered him a cup containing a dose [350] of their medicine, preparatory to his initiation. Nanaboojoo swallowed the contents at a single draught, and found himself completely restored. They then commenced their dances and their songs; they also applied their medicine bags, which, after gently blowing them at him, they would then cast on the ground; at each fall of the medicine bag, Nanaboojoo perceived that his

melancholy, sadness, hatred, and anger disappeared, and affections of an opposite nature took possession of his soul. They all joined in the dance and song — they ate and smoked together. Nanaboojoo thanked them for having initiated him in the mysteries of their grand medicine.

“The manitous brought back the lost Chipiapoos, but it was forbidden him to enter the lodge; he received, through a chink, a burning coal, and was ordered to go and preside over the region of souls, and there, for the happiness of his uncles and aunts, that is, for all men and women, who should repair thither, kindle with this coal a fire which should never be extinguished.

“Nanaboojoo then re-descended upon earth, and, by order of the Great Spirit, initiated all his family in the mysteries of the grand medicine. [351] He procured for each of them a bag well furnished with medicines, giving them strict orders to perpetuate these ceremonies among their descendants, adding at the same time, that these practices, religiously observed, would cure their maladies, procure them abundance in the chase, and give them complete victory over their enemies. (All their religion consists in these superstitious practices, dances and songs; they have the most implicit faith in these strange reveries.)

“Nanaboojoo is our principal intercessor with the Great Spirit; he it was that obtained for us the creation of animals for our food and raiment. He has caused to grow those roots and herbs which are endowed with the virtue of curing our maladies, and of enabling us, in time of famine, to kill the wild animals. He has left the care of them to Mesakkummikokwi, the great-grand-mother of the human race, and in order that we should never invoke her in vain, it has been strictly enjoined on the old woman never to quit the dwelling. Hence,

when an Indian makes the collection of roots and herbs which are to serve him as medicines, he deposits, at the same time, on the earth, a small [352] offering to Mesak-kummikokwi. During his different excursions over the surface of the earth, Nanaboojoo killed all such animals as were hurtful to us, as the mastodon, the mammoth, etc. He has placed four beneficial spirits at the four cardinal points of the earth, for the purpose of contributing to the happiness of the human race. That of the north procures for us ice and snow, in order to aid us in discovering and following the wild animals. That of the south gives us that which occasions the growth of our pumpkins, melons, maize and tobacco. The spirit placed at the west gives us rain, and that of the east gives us light, and commands the sun to make his daily walks around the globe. The thunder we hear is the voice of spirits, having the form of large birds, which Nanaboojoo has placed in the clouds. When they cry very loud we burn some tobacco in our cabins, to make them a smoke-offering and appease them.

“Nanaboojoo yet lives, resting himself after his labors, upon an immense flake of ice, in the Great Lake, (the North Sea). We fear that the whites will one day discover his retreat, and drive him off, then the end of the world is at [353] hand, for as soon as he puts foot on the earth, the whole universe will take fire, and every living creature will perish in the flames!”

In their festivities and religious assemblies, all their songs turn upon some one or other of these fables. When the chief had finished this history, I asked him whether he had any faith in what he had just related. “Assuredly I have, for I have had the happiness to see and entertain three old men of my nation, who penetrated far into the north, and were admitted into the presence of Nanaboojoo,

with whom they conversed a long time. He confirmed all that I have recounted to you!"

Our savages believe that the souls of the dead, in their journey to the great prairie of their ancestors, pass a rapid current, over which the only bridge is a single tree, kept constantly in violent agitation, managed, however, in such a way, that the souls of perfect men pass it in safety, whilst those of the wicked slip off the tree into the water and are lost forever.

Such is the narration given to me by the Potawotomi chief, comprising all the articles of the creed held by this tribe, we can hardly fail to recognize in it, much obscured by the accumulation of ages, the tradition of the universal [354] deluge, of the creation of the universe, of Adam and Eve; even some traces of the incarnation are found in the birth of Nanaboojoo, he was descended of parents, one of whom only, his mother, was of the human race; he is, moreover, the intercessor between God and man.

I recommend myself to your prayers.

I remain, with sentiments of profound respect and esteem,  
your obedient humble servant and brother in Christ,

*P. J. De Smet, S. J.*

No. XXVI

A. M. D. G.

Philadelphia, April 6th, 1847.

MR. J. D. BRYANT,

DEAR SIR,—The nation of the Pawnees is divided into four great tribes, which act in concert as one people. They have their villages upon the river Platte, or Nebraska, and its tributaries, about 150 miles west of the Missouri river. They are the same true children of the desert as they have been these many ages.—They dress in the

skins of animals killed in the chase. They cultivate maize and squashes, using the shoulder-blade of the buffalo as a substitute for the plough and hoe. In the season of the chase, a whole village, men, women, and children, abandon their settlements and go in pursuit of the animals whose flesh supplies them with food. Their huts, which they call akkaros, are circular, and about 140 feet in circumference. They are ingeniously formed by planting young trees [356] at suitable distances apart, then bending and joining their tops to a number of pillars or posts fixed circularly in the centre of the enclosure. The trees are then covered with bark, over which is thrown a layer of earth, nearly a foot in thickness, and finally, a solid mass of green turf completes the structure. These dwellings, thus completed, resemble hillocks. A large aperture in the top serves to admit the light and also to emit the smoke. They are very warm in winter, and cool, but oftentimes very damp, in summer. They are large enough to contain ten or a dozen families.<sup>235</sup>

If, in the long journeys which they undertake in search of game, any should be impeded, either by age or sickness, their children or relations make a small hut of dried grass to shelter them from the heat of the sun or from the weather, leaving as much provision as they are able to spare, and thus abandon them to their destiny. Nothing is more touching than this constrained separation, caused by absolute necessity—the tears and cries of the children on the one hand, and the calm resignation of the aged father or mother on the other. They often encourage their children not to expose their own lives in order to prolong their short remnant [357] of time.

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<sup>235</sup> For the Pawnee and their four great divisions see our volume xiv, p. 233, note 179. See illustration of interior of a Kansa lodge, built in a manner similar to the Pawnee, in *ibid.*, p. 208.—ED.

They are anxious to depart on their long journey, and to join their ancestors in the hunting-grounds of the Great Spirit. If, some days after, they are successful in the chase, they return as quickly as possible to render assistance and consolation. These practices are common to all the nomadic tribes of the mountains.

The Pawnees have nearly the same ideas concerning the universal deluge as those which I have given of the Potawotomies. In relation to the soul, they say, that there is a resemblance in the body which does not die, but detaches itself when the body expires. If a man has been good during his life, kind to his parents, a good hunter, a good warrior, his soul (*sa ressemblance*) is transported into a land of delights, abundance, and pleasures. If, on the contrary, a man has been wicked, hard-hearted, cruel and indolent, his soul passes through narrow straits, difficult and dangerous, into a country where all is confusion, contrariety and unhappiness.

In their religious ceremonies, they dance, sing and pray before a bird stuffed with all kinds of roots and herbs used in their superstition. They have a fabulous tradition, which teaches them that the morning star sent this bird to their ancestors, [358] as its representative, with orders to invoke it on all important occasions and to exhibit it in times of sacrifice.<sup>236</sup> Before the invocation, they fill the calumet with the sacred herb contained in the bird. They then puff out the smoke towards the star, offer the prayers and make their demands, dancing and singing, and celebrating in verses the great power of the bird. They implore its assistance and its favor, whether to obtain success in hunting or in war, or to demand snow in order to make the buffalo descend from the mountains, or to appease the Great Spirit when a public calamity befalls the nation,

<sup>236</sup> See our volume xxvii, p. 208, note 82.—ED.



or a family, or even a single person. The Pawnees are one of the few aboriginal tribes, which, descending from the ancient Mexicans, are guilty of offering human sacrifices.<sup>237</sup> In order to justify this barbarous practice, they say that the morning star taught them by means of the bird, that such sacrifices were agreeable to it, and would bring down upon the nation the favor of the great Deliberator<sup>238</sup> of the universe. They are firmly persuaded that human sacrifices are most agreeable to the Great Spirit. Hence, when the Pawnee takes a prisoner and wishes [359] to render himself acceptable to Heaven, he devotes it to the morning star. At the time of sacrifice, he delivers the prisoner over into the hands of the jugglers; soon after which, commence the ceremonies preparatory to the offering. I was in the neighborhood when one of these bloody sacrifices took place, and the particulars, which I am about to relate, were reported to me by worthy eyewitnesses.

The victim in this horrid transaction was a young Sioux girl, named Dakotha, aged 15 years, who had been taken prisoner by the Pawnees about six months previous to her immolation. During the months of her captivity, Dakotha received from the Pawnees every mark of regard which savages are capable of bestowing. She was an honored guest at all the *fêtes* and *festivities* of the village; and everywhere was treated, in appearance at least, rather as a fond friend than as a prisoner. It is the custom thus to prepare the victim, in order to conceal their infernal design.

The month of April being the season for planting, is on that account selected for the offering of their abom-

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<sup>237</sup> See on this subject of human sacrifice note 83 in De Smet's *Letters*, our volume xxvii, p. 210 — ED.

<sup>238</sup> A name which they give to the Great Spirit.—DE SMET.

inable sacrifices. To this end, four of the principal savages of the tribe assemble in the largest and most beautiful [360] akkaro or hut, to deliberate with Tirawaat, or the great Deliberator of the universe, concerning the sacrifice of the victim. According to their belief, a human offering is rewarded by him with an abundant harvest. He fills the hunting-grounds convenient to their villages with immense herds of buffaloes, deer and antelopes, thus enabling them to kill their prey with more facility and with less risk of coming in contact with other warlike and hostile nations.

The oldest savage of the tribe presides at the feast given on the occasion. Ten of the best singers and musicians, each with his peculiar instrument, squat in the middle of the akkaro. Four of them have dried calabashes in their hands, from which the seeds have been extracted and small pebbles placed in their stead, which being shaken by the muscular arms of these gigantic savages, produce a sound like falling hail. Four others beat their tekapi-routche — this is a kind of drum of a most mournful and deafening sound; it is made from the trunk of a tree and is about three feet long and one-and-a-half broad, covered at both ends with deer skin. The remaining two have a kind of flute made of reeds, about two feet long and one inch in diameter, instruments, such as were used by [361] the ancient shepherds, and which give forth sounds that may be heard at the distance of half a mile. They fasten to each instrument a little tewaara, or medicine bag, filled with roots and other materials, to which, in their superstitious rites, they attach a supernatural power, that renders their offering more agreeable to the Author of life. Four sentinels, each armed with a lance, take their position at the four cardinal points of the lodge, to maintain order among the spectators and to prevent

the entrance of the women, young girls and children. The guests are seated upon the ground or upon mats on the right and left of the presiding juggler, turning around from time to time in the most grotesque and ridiculous dances. Imagine thirty swarthy savages, with their bodies tattooed; their faces besmeared with paint — white, black, made of soot and the scrapings of the kettles, yellow, green and vermilion; and their long and dishevelled hair clotted with mud or clay. Placing themselves in a circle, they shriek, they leap, and give to their bodies, their arms, their legs, and their heads a thousand hideous contortions; while streams of perspiration, pouring down their bodies, render the horrors of their appearance still more dreadful, by [362] the confused commingling of the colors with which they are smeared — now they crowd together pell-mell, then separate, some to the right, some to the left, one upon one foot, another upon two, while others go on all-fours without order, and although without appearance of measure, yet, in perfect harmony with their drums, their calabashes and their flutes.

Near the centre of the hut, at about four feet from the fire-place, are placed four large buffalo heads, dissected, in order that they may take the augury. The presiding juggler, the musicians and the dancers have their heads covered with the down of the swan, which sticks to them by means of honey, with which they smear their hair — a practice common to all the tribes of North America in their superstitious rites. The president or presiding juggler alone is painted with red, the musicians, one half red and the other half black, while all the others are daubed with all colors, and in the most fantastic figures.

Each time that the music, the songs and the dances are performed, the spectators observe the most profound silence, and during the space of thirty minutes that the

extraordinary charivari continues, nothing is heard but the chants, the cries, the howlings and the music. When all [363] have figured in the dance, the presiding juggler gives the signal to stop, crying out with all the force of his lungs. Immediately all cease, each one takes his place, and the auditory responds: "Néva! Néva! Néva!" it is well, it is well, it is well! The dancers then fill the ancient nawishkaro, or religious calumet, which is used only upon occasions the most important. They offer it to the president, who, striking with both his hands the long pipe, adorned with pearls and worked with different figures, goes and squats himself down by the fire-place. One of the guards places a coal upon the mysterious calumet. Having lighted it, he rises and gives a puff to each of the musicians without once slacking his hold from the pipe. He then turns towards the centre, and raising his eyes towards heaven, he offers the calumet to the Master of life, resting for a moment in majestic silence: then, offering three puffs to heaven, he speaks these words: "O, Tirawaat! Thou who beholdest all things, smoke with thy children, and take pity on us." He then offers the calumet to the buffalo heads, their great manitous, salutes each of them with two puffs, and then goes to empty the bowl of the pipe in a wooden dish, prepared for that purpose, that the sacred ashes [364] may be afterwards gathered and preserved in a deer-skin pouch.<sup>239</sup>

After the dance, the master of ceremonies serves up the repast to the guests, seated in a circle. The food consists of dried buffalo meat and boiled maize, served in wooden plates, filled to the brim. Each one is bound

<sup>239</sup> This method of smoking is in great repute among all the savages of the West. It is of the same importance and equally as binding as an oath among civilized nations. If two savages, ready to kill each other, can be induced to accept the calumet, the dispute ceases, and the bond of their friendship becomes stronger than ever.—DE SMET.



Buffalos discovered





to empty his plate, even should he expose himself to the danger of death from indigestion. The president offers a portion of the meat and maize to the Great Spirit, and places it accordingly upon the ground, and he then makes a similar offering to one of the buffalo heads, which is supposed to be a party to the feast. At length, while each one occupies himself with doing honor to his plate, one of the chiefs of the band rises up and announces to all the guests that the Master of life dances with him, and that he accepts the calumet and the feasting. All the band reply: "Néva! Néva! Néva!" This is the first condemnation.

[365] The repast ended, they again dance, after which the calumet is lighted the second time; and, as in the former instance, is offered to the Master of life and to the buffalo heads, upon which, the lodge again resounds with the triple cry, "Néva!" This last dance condemns, without appeal, the unfortunate victim whose immolation is invoked.

After all their grotesque dances, their cries, their chants and their vociferations, the savages, preceded by the musicians, go out of the lodge, to present the sacred calumet to the buffalo heads placed on the tops of the lodges of the village, each of which is ornamented with from two to eight heads, preserved as the trophies of their skill in the chase. At each puff the multitude raise a furious cry, for now the whole village joins in the extraordinary procession. They stop before the lodge of the Sioux girl, and make the air resound with the horrible imprecations against their enemies and against the unfortunate and innocent victim, who represents them on the present occasion. From this moment she is guarded by two old satellites, whose office it is to beguile her from the least suspicion that she is the victim for the coming sacrifice;

and whose duty it also is to entertain [366] her upon the great feast, they prepare on the occasion in her honor, and that she may be well fed in order to appear more beautiful and fat, and thereby more agreeable to the Master of life. This ends the first day of the ceremonies.

On the second day, two old female savages, with dishevelled hair, their faces wrinkled and daubed with black and red paint, their naked arms and legs tattooed, barefooted, and with no other dress than a deer-skin petticoat, extending down to the knee—in a word, two miserable-looking beldams, capable of striking terror in any beholder,—issue from their huts with pipes in their hands, ornamented with the scalps which their husbands have taken from their unhappy enemies. Passing through the village, they dance around each akkaro, solemnly announcing, “that the Sioux girl has been given to the Master of life by wise and just men, that the offering is acceptable to him, and that each one should prepare to celebrate the day with festivity and mirth.” At this announcement, the idlers and children of the village move about and shout with joy. They then, still dancing, re-conduct the two old squaws to their huts, before which they place their pikes as trophies, and enter.—All then [367] return to their own lodge, to partake of the feasts of their relatives.

About ten o'clock in the morning of the third day, all the young women and girls of the village, armed with hatchets, repair to the lodge of their young and unhappy captive, and invite her to go into the forest with them to cut wood.—The simple-hearted, confiding child, accepts their malicious invitation with eagerness and joy, happy to breathe once more the pure air.—They then give her a hatchet, and the female troop advance towards the place marked out in the dance, making the forest resound with shouts of joy. Atipaata, an old squaw who conducted

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'beam'

them, designates, by a blow of the hatchet, the tree which is to be cut down. Each then gives it one blow, after which the victim approaches to complete the work. As soon as she commences what seems to her but pastime, the whole crowd of young furies surround her, howling and dancing. Unconscious that the tree is to supply the wood for her own sacrifice, the poor child pursues her work as if a great honor had been reserved for her. — Atipaata, the old woman, then fastens to her the ashki<sup>240</sup> with which to draw the wood.

[368] The troop then lead the way towards the village, dancing as they pass along, but giving the hapless victim almost no assistance in dragging her load. An innumerable multitude attend them to the place of sacrifice, and receive them with loud acclamations. They there relieve her of her burden and again place her in the hands of the guards, who, with voices harsh and quivering, chant the great deeds of their younger days and re-conduct her to her lodge. In the meantime the whole band assist to arrange the wood between two trees, after which they immediately disperse.

On the morning of the fourth day, before sunrise, a savage visits all the lodges to announce to each family, in the name of the Master of life, that they must furnish two billets of wood about three feet long for the sacrifice.

Then thirty warriors issue from their lodges, decked in all sorts of accoutrements; their heads adorned with deer and buffalo horns, with the tails of horses and the plumes of the [369] eagle and heron, interwoven with

<sup>240</sup> The ashki is a cord, made of horse-hair or of the bark of the elm, which they prepare by boiling it in cold water. It varies from twenty-five to sixty feet in length, and, although it is but about one inch in thickness, it is strong enough to bind the most powerful man. This they adorn with the quills of the porcupine, and with little bells. The bells, besides for the sake of ornament, are intended to give notice in case the victim makes any efforts to escape.— DE SMET.

their scalp-locks, while the tails of wolves and wild cats stream from various parts behind, as the wings of Mercury are represented, with pendants hanging from their noses and ears, so elongated by the weight of the ornaments suspended to them, that they float about and strike against their shoulders.—Glass beads, or necklaces of brass or steel adorn their necks, while highly-ornamented deer-skin leggins and curiously-painted buffalo-skins, negligently thrown over their shoulders, complete their grotesque habiliments. Thus accoutred they present themselves at the hut of their captive, who is already adorned with the most beautiful dress their fancy can devise, or the materials at their command produce. Her head-dress is composed of the feathers of the eagle and swan, and descends behind in gracefully waving curves, even to the ground. Her person is properly painted with red and black lines. A frock of deer-skin descends to the knee, while a beautiful pair of leggins extend from thence to the ankle. A pair of moccasins garnished with porcupine quills, pearl and glass beads, are on her feet. Pendants hang from her ears and nose, a necklace ornaments her neck, and bracelets her arms; [370] nothing was spared that could add to her beauty.

Tranquillity and joy distinguishes her as she approaches the grand feast, which she has been made to believe her kind guardians have prepared to honor her. At the first cry of the warriors, the poor child comes out of the hut and walks at the head of her executioners, who follow in single file. As they pass along they enter into all the huts, where the most profound silence and the utmost propriety reign. The Sioux girl walks around the fire-place, her followers do the same, and, just as she leaves the lodge, the principal squaw gives her two billets of wood, which the unconscious victim gives in her turn

to each of the savages. In this manner, when she has been made to collect all the wood to serve for her immolation, she takes her place in the rear of the band, joyous and content that she has had the happiness to contribute to the pleasure of her executioners; after which they again restore her to her two guards, to be presented with her last repast, which consists of a large plate of maize.

All now wait in anxious expectation to witness the last scene of the bloody drama. The whole village is in commotion. Everywhere [371] the warriors, old and young, may be seen preparing their murderous arrow, as upon the eve of a battle. Some practice shooting at a mark; the more barbarous, thirsting for the blood of their enemies, encourage and instruct their children in the use of the bow and arrow, and what part of the body they ought to strike.—The young women and girls devote themselves to clearing away the brushes and preparing the place of sacrifice, after the accomplishment of which, they employ themselves during the rest of that day and night in polishing their necklaces, pendants and bracelets, and all the other ornaments in which they wish to appear at the great feast.

On the fifth day, an aid-de-camp of Lechartetewarouchte, or the chief of sacrifice, ran through the village to announce, in the name of his master, the necessity of preparing the red and black paint, which is to serve for the grand ceremony. It is vain to attempt to give you, my dear sir, an adequate description of this personage, either as regards his costume, his figure, or his manner; it is everything that a savage can invent of the fantastic, the ridiculous and the frightful, united in one person. The collector of colors himself scarcely yields [372] to his comrade in monstrosity. He has the appearance of one, truly, just escaped from the infernal regions. His

body is painted black, which, contrasted with the whiteness of his teeth and of his huge eyes, and with his hair besmeared with white clay, and bristling like the mane of a lion, gives him an aspect terrible and ferocious in the extreme. At each heel is fastened the tail of a wolf, and on his feet a pair of moccasins made of buffalo skin, with the long shaggy hair on the outside. He passes through the whole village with a measured step, holding a wooden plate in each hand. He enters the huts successively, and, as he approaches the fire-place, he cries aloud: "The Master of life sends me here." Immediately, a woman comes and empties into one of his plates either some red or some black paint, which she had prepared. Upon the reception of which, he raises his eyes to heaven, and with a loud voice says: "Regard the love of thy children, O Tirawaat! However poor, all that they possess is thine, and they give it to thee. Grant us an abundant harvest. Fill our hunting-grounds with buffaloes, deer, stags and antelopes. Make us powerful against our enemies, so that we may again renew this great sacrifice." [373] Each one replies by the usual exclamation: "Néva! Néva! Néva!"

After the return of the collector of colors, and before sunrise, the last scene commences. Men and women, boys and girls, daub themselves in all the colors and forms imaginable. They deck themselves in whatever they possess which in their estimation is either beautiful or precious — pearls, beads, porcelain collars, the claws of the white bear, (this is in their view the most costly and valuable decoration) bracelets and pendants; nothing is forgotten on this occasion. They ornament their hair with the feathers of the heron, and of the gray eagle, a bird superstitiously venerated by them. Thus equipped for their sortie, they listen attentively for the first signal to the sacrifice.



While these preparations are in progress, the Tewa-arouchte, a religious band of distinguished warriors, known in the procession by the down of swans upon their hair or upon the tops of their heads, and by their naked bodies painted in red and black lines, follow the braves of the nation armed with their bows and arrows, which are sedulously concealed beneath their buffalo robes. Thus they approach the lodge where the unconscious victim awaits, as she thinks, [374] the happy moment for the festivities given in her honor, to commence. She is now delivered into the hands of her executioners, dressed in the beautiful costume of the previous day, with the addition of a cord tied to each ankle. The poor child is all interest and in a kind of impatience to participate in the grand festivities. She smiles as she looks round upon the most cruel and the most revengeful enemies of her race. Not the slightest agitation, fear, or suspicion, is visible in her manner. She walks with joy and confidence in the midst of her executioners. Arrived at the fatal spot, a frightful presentiment flashes across her mind. There is no one of her own sex present. In vain do her eyes wander from place to place, in order to find the evidences of a feast. Why that solitary fire? And those three posts, which she herself drew from the forest, and which she saw fastened between two trees, and those swarthy figures of the warriors, what can they mean? All, all indicate some dreadful project. They order her to mount the three posts. She hesitates, she trembles as an innocent lamb prepared for the slaughter. She weeps most bitterly and with a voice the most touching, such as must have broken any other hearts than those of these [375] savage men, she implores them not to kill her. With a persuasive tone they endeavor to convince her that their intention is not to injure her, but that the ceremonies in which

she participates are indispensable before the grand feast. One of the most active of the savages unrolls the cords tied to her wrists and assists her to mount to the post. He passes the cords over the branches of the two trees, between which the sacrifice is to be made.

These are rendered firm by the powerful arms of the other savages, and her feet immediately fastened to the top-most of the three posts, which she had unconsciously cut and drawn to the fatal spot. On the instant all doubt of their intentions vanishes from her mind. The savages no longer conceal from her their frightful project. She cries aloud, she weeps, she prays; but her supplications, her tears and her prayers are alike drowned in the *melée*, and cry of their horrible imprecations against her nation.

Upon her innocent and devoted head they concentrate the full measure of their vengeance, of all the cruelties, of all the crimes, of all the injustice and cruelty of the Sioux, which may have taken place in their most cruel and protracted [376] wars, and which from time immemorial had been transmitted from father to son, as a precious heritage of vengeance and resentment. In a manner the most furious and most triumphant they exult with leaping and howling, like wild beasts, around their trembling victim. They then despoil her of all her ornaments and of her dress, when the chief of the sacrifice approaches and paints one-half of her body black and the other half red, the colours of their victims. He then scorches her armpits and sides with a pine-knot torch. After these preparatory rites, he gives the signal to the whole tribe, who make the air resound with the terrible war-cry of the *Sassaskwi*. At this piercing cry, which freezes the heart with terror, which paralyzes the timid and rouses the ardor of the brave, which confounds the buffalo in his course, and fills the bear with such fear as to take from

him all the power of resisting or fleeing from his enemies, the savages, impatient and greedy for blood, issue from their dark lodges. Like a terrific hurricane they rush headlong to the fatal spot. Their cries, mingled with the noise of their feet, resemble the roar of thunder, increasing as the storm approaches. As a swarm of bees surround their queen, these Pawnee savages [377] encompass the Sioux child—their trembling victim. In the twinkling of an eye, their bows are bent and their arrows adjusted to the cords. The arrow of Lecharitetewarouchte, or chief of the sacrifice, is the only one which is barbed with iron. With this, it is his province to pierce the heart of the innocent Dakotha. A profound silence reigns for an instant among the ferocious band. No sound breaks the awful stillness save the sobs and piteous moans of the victim, who hangs trembling in the air, while the chief of the sacrifice makes a last offering of her to the Master of the universe. At that moment he transfixes her through the heart—upon the instant a thousand murderous arrows quiver in the body of the poor child. Her whole body is one shapeless mass, riddled with arrows as numerous as are the quills upon the back of the porcupine.

While the howling and the dancing continue, the great chief of the nation, mounting the three posts in triumph, plucks the arrows from the dead body and casts them into the fire. The iron-barbed arrow being the only one preserved for future sacrifices. He then squeezes the blood from the mangled flesh, upon the maize and other seeds, which stand around in baskets ready [378] to be planted; and then, as the last act of this cruel and bloody sacrifice, he plucks the still palpitating heart from the body, and, heaping the fiercest imprecations upon the enemies of his race, devours it amidst the shouts and screams

of his people. The rite is finished. The haughty and satisfied savages move away from the scene of their awful tragedy; they pass the remainder of the day in feasts and merriment. The murdered and deformed body hangs where it was immolated, a prey to wolves and carnivorous birds. I will end this painful tragedy, by giving you an extract of a former letter.

“Such horrid cruelties could not but bring down the wrath of Heaven upon their nation. As soon as the report of the sacrifice reached the Sioux, they burned with the desire to avenge their honor, and bound themselves by oaths that they would not rest until they had killed as many Pawnees as their innocent victim had bones or joints in her body. More than a hundred Pawnees have at length fallen under their tomahawks, and their oaths have since been still more amply fulfilled in the massacre of their wives and children.

“In view of so much cruelty, who could mistake the agency of the arch enemy of mankind, [379] and who could refuse to exert himself to bring these benighted nations to the knowledge of the One only true Mediator between God and man, and of the only true sacrifice without which it is impossible to appease the Divine justice?”

With sentiments of respect and esteem,

I remain, my dear sir, yours, &c.

*Peter J. De Smet, S. J.*

No. XXVII

A. M. D. G.

EXTRACT FROM THE MISSIONARY'S JOURNAL

TO-DAY, 17th August, we pitched our tents upon the borders of a winding stream, in the heart of a wild, moun-

tainous country, whose deep ravines and gloomy caverns are well suited for the dens of wild animals. Great as our expectations were of finding here abundance of game, they were not deceived. In less than an hour our hunters killed as many as twelve bears. During the night, an event of a far more serious nature occurred. The sudden firing of a gun roused us from slumber. Every warrior was on the alert; that shot could have proceeded from no hand save that of a "Black-Foot!" We looked at one another in silent anticipation. Who, then, had been the sufferer? The painful question was quickly answered. It was the [381] poor widow Camilla, one of the Sinpoil tribe.<sup>241</sup> The ball had passed through her throat, and she expired without a groan! Happily, her soul was ripe for Heaven. From the period of her first communion, she had never passed a Sunday without approaching the holy table, nor was her baptismal robe sullied by the slightest stain. The funeral obsequies were performed on the banks of Yellow-Rock River,<sup>242</sup> because that spot was better suited than any other to conceal her sepulchre from the avaricious Black-Foot assassin. All things work together for good to them that love God; this death, terrible, indeed, in the sight of men, but precious in the eyes of the Lord, became the source of a good work. The murdered woman left two daughters, both very young; had her life been spared, she would not, perhaps, have been able to shield their innocence from the dangers to which it would have been exposed; but, now, they were immediately adopted by Ambrose, chief of the Flat-Heads, and father of a numerous family; in his noble heart, charity,

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<sup>241</sup> For the Sanpoil Indians see De Smet's *Letters* in our volume xxvii, p. 319, note 161.—ED.

<sup>242</sup> For different forms of the name of the Yellowstone see our volume xxii, p. 375, note 351.—ED.

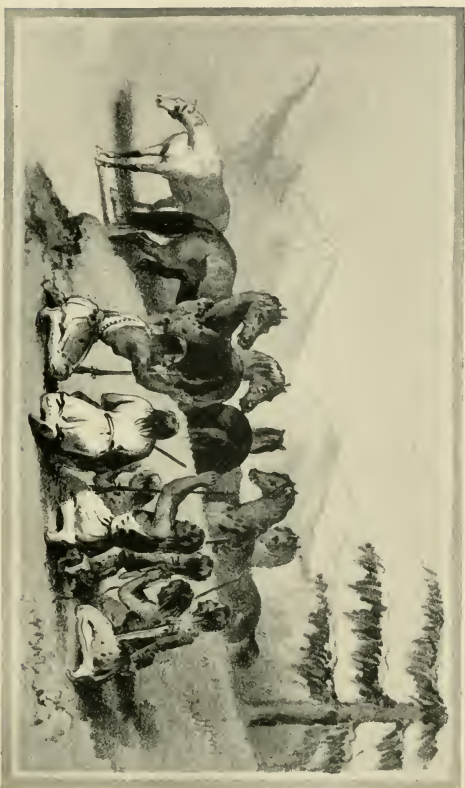
piety, and confidence in God, go hand-in-hand with his courage.

At the distance of a few gun-shots from Yellow-Rock, the buffaloes made their appearance. [382] One of them plunged into the river to avoid the death which threatened him, swam rapidly down the current, then suddenly tacked about to escape his pursuers; and, finally, exhausted by his efforts, unable longer to contend with his fate, came out of the river, and stretched himself upon the turf at the entrance of our camp, where his presence caused no other mischief than that of exciting the mirth of the women and children.

Farther on, two bears were seen making their way through the bushes. The young people, who were the first to perceive them, announced their discovery by loud yells. Immediately, a Black-Foot, a friend of the Flat-Heads, sprang forward with the intention of giving the first blow to the common enemy; but the sagacious animal, anticipating his design, rushed from his lair, and fastened his enormous claws on the uplifted arm of the young Indian, whose situation would have been desperate, had not a Flat-Head come to his assistance. A few days after, another converted Black-Foot, finding himself in the same circumstances, and wishing to show that he knew better than his comrade how to kill bears, went [383] about it in the same manner, and shared the same fate; a punishment which his temerity richly deserved.

Whilst we were encamped in this place, several chiefs of the Corbeaux tribe came to visit the Flat-Heads, accompanied by the flower of their young warriors. They spoke with enthusiasm of the visit their nation had received from a Black-gown in 1842, and expressed great desire for the time to come when they, like the Flat-Heads, would enjoy the privilege of having Black-gowns always





A Prayer for success in hunting.



with them, to instruct them in heavenly things. They still observe the superstitious practices of the calumet. To render the odor of the pacific incense agreeable to their gods, it is necessary that the tobacco and the herb (skwiltz), the usual ingredients, should be mixed with a small quantity of buffalo's dung, and that the *great pipe*, after having gone round the lodge, should re-commence the circuit as soon as it arrives at the opening, without which ceremony they imagine it would be useless to smoke with their brethren, or incense, as they do, the heavens, earth, four cardinal points, and medals of Washington and Jackson.

Nothing but misfortunes could await them. [384] Whilst they remained with us, we buried a Pend-d'Oreille Indian, who had died shortly after baptism, strengthened by all the sacraments of the church. This ceremony, which was performed with more than ordinary pomp in honor of the visitors, was concluded by the solemn erection of the cross on the grave of the deceased. May the remembrance of these last duties paid to a departed child of the church, increase in the hearts of the Corbeaux the desire of knowing Him, without the knowledge of whom there is no salvation. The following day they returned to their own camp.

The Pierced-Noses were now on their way to their own country; the Flat-Heads, on the contrary, were still in pursuit of game; for, although the season was far advanced, they had not yet commenced to lay in their winter provisions. Early the following morning, we struck our tents and resumed our march. We had not proceeded far, when our attention was attracted by a herd of buffaloes quietly feeding in the beautiful valley at our feet. They were so numerous, that each of the hunters killed several. The slaughter of these animals was but the prelude of

that which was to take place on the following days. Our hunters brought in [385] game in abundance. On one occasion, they returned laden with the spoils of 344 fat cows. We encamped in the very heart of the Black-Foot territory, yet the howling of wolves and bears, calling one another to their nocturnal repast, was the only sound that disturbed our repose. The hunting season is a time of rest for the missionary, of intimate union with his God, of renovation for his soul! It was in this spirit I received, with humble gratitude, the short but severe illness with which I was visited at this period. I regarded it, likewise, as sent me in punishment for the too natural pleasure I felt in contemplating the strange and varied scenes by which I was surrounded. During our encampment in this spot, I had the consolation of baptizing ten adults.

An unexpected fall of snow warned us that it was time to think of our return. The chief accordingly gave orders for all to be in readiness to set out the following day. The weather was clear, but intensely cold; and, suffering as I still was, from the effects of my recent illness, I had great difficulty in supporting its severity. We were, however, soon cheered by milder days, and warmer sunshine. Our young hunters were, once more, all animation. The pleasures [386] of the chase were resumed as far as the good order necessary for the homeward march would permit. Even the children caught the general spirit, and bounded off in pursuit of some smaller animal, which the elated winner of the race never failed to bring back on his shoulder.

We were now entering the defile where we had before met with such brilliant success. At almost every step we fell in with some straggler. At one time, an old decrepit buffalo; at another, a fat cow, and sometimes a playful calf, whose dam had already fallen a victim.

These animals were an easy prey, and their capture was a new source of sport for the boys.

On the 28th I retired to the summit of a neighboring mountain, to read the vespers of St. Michael. The atmosphere was unusually serene; not a sound disturbed the silence of nature. I gazed on the quiet beauty of the scene, hushed, as it were, in the presence of God, and my heart dilated at the thought of the thousands of unconverted Indians, buried in the darkness of idolatry. Full of these thoughts, I raised my eyes, and, excited as my imagination was, it seemed to me that I beheld the archangel, Michael, standing on the opposite mountain, exclaiming, "Deluded nations! Who is [387] like unto God?" The voice resounded through the forests — it was echoed by the deep ravines. I fancied it was heard and understood by the wild children of the woods; their responding shouts rung in my ear. Yielding to the enthusiasm of my feelings, I hastily quitted my elevated position, and erected a wooden cross on the summit of a neighboring eminence. Some days after, a hunter discovered, near the half-consumed embers of an extinguished fire, a similar cross, to which a banner was attached. My first thought was, that it had been planted there by some Catholic, who had lost his way in the forest, and been devoured by the wolves. The Flat-Heads, however, well acquainted with the practices of their ancient foes, the Black-Feet, informed me that it was a custom among them to erect these crosses to the moon, in order to render her favorable to the robbery or chase, in which they were about to engage. This information dispelled the pleasing fancies in which I had indulged; and painfully reminded me that the God-Saviour is yet far from being adored in these wild abodes. May we not hope that the time will yet come, when the banner

of the true cross will wave triumphant o'er this benighted land!

[388] The obstacles which have hitherto prevented the missionaries from penetrating into the Black-Foot territory are now beginning to disappear, and there is every prospect of our soon being able to commence the glorious work of their conversion.

The next day we entered a mountain pass, where the foot of man had seldom trodden, as was proved by the fact, that fifteen beavers were taken in one night by three hunters. After following for some time the circuitous windings of the ravine, we came to an ascent so slippery, that at every instant I was in anticipation of some sad catastrophe. Presently a sumpter-horse missed his footing and fell, rolling down the precipice. Who, that had seen him fall from rock to rock, would ever have thought, that in a few minutes he would be journeying on, laden as before! Without uttering a single word, the guide made her way through the deep snow to the spot where the poor animal lay, unloaded him, raised him from the ground, replaced his burden, and brought him back to the rear of the troop.

We continued our route until sunset, along the mountain's summit; at length, after a forced march of ten hours, we pitched our tents on a [389] beautiful island, where we enjoyed both security and repose. Surrounded by the waters of the Missouri, and abounding in rich pastures, this charming spot seems, as it were, destined by nature as a place of rest for the wearied traveller.

It would have been impossible to contemplate without admiring the loveliness of the landscape. From the southern coast of the river arose a ridge of mountains, whose varied colors of blue, red, green, and yellow, gave them a striking appearance; the effect of which was



heightened by a small stream, leaping from rock to rock, in the form of a cascade, cooling the parched ground, insinuating itself into the crevices of the rocks, and giving birth to an infinite variety of creeping plants, and flowering shrubs.—The island itself is beautiful beyond description. The scenery is diversified by groups of the majestic button-ball, which, in this country, is the giant of the vegetable kingdom. It was under the shade of one of these noble trees that our hunters prepared to celebrate the feast of the Maternity. The sun's last rays had long disappeared beneath the horizon, ere all was ready for the evening prayer. After which, notwithstanding the fatigues of the day, a large [390] fire was kindled before my tent, and the greater part of the night consecrated by these fervent children of the woods, to the reconciliation of their souls with God. The following day the Holy Sacrifice was celebrated with as much solemnity as the circumstances would permit. Of the ninety persons who then approached the table of the Lord, there was not one, who, since the departure from St. Mary's, had not communicated every month. Several had enjoyed that happiness each week. During the evening office nothing particular occurred. The eve of my departure the mothers brought their young children to receive my blessing; and the chiefs erected a cross in token of their gratitude for the favors received during the hunting season. To this latter circumstance the island is indebted for the beautiful name of St. Croix.

The following day I bade farewell to my dear neophytes; and, after joining in prayer with them for the last time, I set out on my return to St. Mary's.

*N. Point, S. J.*

## No. XXVIII

“HENCEFORWARD THE PRAYER OF THE FLAT-HEADS  
SHALL BE OURS”

BY REV. P. N. POINT

WE shall see what gave occasion to these remarkable words uttered by thirty-seven Black-Foot, who had fallen into the hands of the Flat-Heads.

It is rare, at present, to find any Black-Foot, even among the most vicious tribes, who are not convinced that the *Black-gowns* desire their happiness.

The following observations clearly prove my proposition: 1, the kind reception they gave the Black Robe who was taken by sixty of their warriors: 2, the attention with which they listened to the Rev. Mr. Thibault, a Canadian priest, who fell in with a large company of them at Fort Augusta,<sup>243</sup> on the River Saskatchewan: 3, sending back to St. Mary's, a horse belonging to a Flat-Head missionary; a circumstance [392] hitherto unheard of, in the relations of the Black-Foot with the Flat-Heads; 4, the confidence which several have manifested in the missionaries, on many remarkable occasions; 5, the smoking of the calumet in the plain of the Great Valley, with a small number of Flat-Heads whom they might have killed without difficulty; 6, the amicable visits they have paid the Flat-Heads by the persuasion of the hoary chief Nicholas, (baptized,) and the habitual residence of several of the tribe at the village of St. Mary's; 7, the plunder of horses is incomparably more rare than during the preceding years; 8, the four years' cessation of any serious attack; though, formerly, not a hunting party passed without a sanguinary battle with the Flat-Heads. In proof of this,

<sup>243</sup> Fort Augustus, the present Edmonton, Alberta.—ED.

remember the sixty-five battles of old Paulin. If we add to all this, the providential and admirable circumstance which occurred during the chase, and which we purpose relating, surely, it may be permitted to form the brightest prospects relative to the religious conquest of this numerous tribe; and I sincerely hope that an occurrence, which lately took place at St. Mary's, will contribute much to realize my desires.

[393] The 2d or 3d February, during the night, the dogs barked—a pistol-shot was heard—a mournful silence ensues! A thief, doubtless, had been wounded. The following morning, marks of blood could be traced as far as the river, which led to the conclusion that the robber had perished in the waves; but, three days since, George Sapime, whilst duck-shooting, found the suffering being among some bushes, so exhausted by loss of blood that he could scarcely stand. George might easily have despatched him on the spot, according to the savage custom; but he thought it better to return to the village and take counsel as to what seemed most expedient to be done with the hapless desperado. At this intelligence, numbers of Indians mount their horses and gallop off, full armed, to the spot indicated. Whilst this was being transacted, the incident was related to Father Mengarini. Pelchimo and Ambrose, two really brave Flat-Heads,<sup>244</sup> who communicated the intelligence, thought it base to kill a dying man. The zealous missionary conceived an ardent desire to secure the salvation of the culprit, by pouring on his soul the saving waters of regeneration. Pelchimo, seconding the good design, flies to the place, and arrives at the very instant when the [394] pistols were cocked to terminate the prisoner's existence. "Stop!" vociferates the feel-

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<sup>244</sup> For the former exploits of these two chiefs see De Smet's *Letters* in our volume xxvii, pp. 285, 286.—ED.

ing Pelchimo. At this word the execution is suspended, and an hour after, the Black-Foot enemy and robber is tended, in the chieftain's lodge, with all the kindness that could be lavished on a noble and much-loved sufferer.

Father Mengarini, after having dressed his wounds, spoke to him of God, and his judgments: the sick man answered, that it was the first time he had heard these great truths. Such a reply, made the father cherish the hope of saving his soul; and, also, of contributing, by means of this man, to the designs of mercy, which, it seemed, the Almighty God had towards this terrible nation. "Brethren," said he, addressing the assembled chiefs, "during four years the Black-gowns have been among you, and each day have they spoken to you of God. You know well that His divine Son not only died on the cross for all men, but even pardoned his enemies, and prayed for his executioners, to teach us how we should act in the like occasions. An enemy has fallen into your hands — remember, he has a soul like yours, redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, and destined to sing eternally the divine mercy of your Saviour! [395] What shall be done with this man? Is he to live, or must he die?" "Let him live," answered every tongue. Overjoyed to find their hearts so replete with compassion, the Black-gown was expressing his satisfaction to the assembled tribe, when he was told that some obscure savages, of a different tribe, were not of the same opinion as the generous chieftains who surrounded him. This information induced the father to take a different tone; and addressing the murmurers, he thus spoke: "Brethren! when we pardon a foe, we imitate the ordinary conduct of God towards men. Who, among you, has not sinned during his life? And how often has God forgiven you? If, instead of forgetting your multiplied offences, the

Almighty had placed your souls in the power of your infernal enemy, what would now be your fate? But no; God has not treated you thus; he has sent his ministers among you,—numbered you among his children, and promised heaven to your fidelity and compassion for the unfortunate; and who knows, if this signal favor may not depend on the generosity you exercise towards your enemy? The blood of Jesus Christ pleads for mercy in his behalf. Already have your chiefs pronounced his pardon. Will you imitate their [396] noble conduct? Ah! if you refuse, take your knives and bury them in your enemy's heart! But, from that instant, call not God your Father; cease saying to Him: 'forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;' for, our Common Father might hear your prayer, but, it would be for your eternal reprobation." This brief but energetic appeal caused such sensation throughout the auditory, that every one approved the first decision. From that moment the entire village of St. Mary's, with the exception of a few malicious hearts, shared in the generous sentiments of the Flat-Head chiefs. Selpisto, a chieftain of the Pends-d'Oreilles, happened to be, at this time, at St. Mary's. He took the Black-Foot under his protection, and when he recovered from his wounds, loaned him a horse to return to his country; and he even redoubled his attention at the moment when he received the news that one of his sons had fallen a sacrifice to the Black-Feet. When the youth was met by his enemies, he was returning in triumph to St. Mary's, with the horses recently stolen from the village. His bravery had forced the robbers to return them; this circumstance rendered his loss a still greater affliction to his family. The return of the Black-Foot, so [397] honorably dismissed, and the relation he gave the tribe of the mercy exercised towards him, caused his nation to look upon the

Flat-Heads in a different light. "I am very glad," wrote Father Mengarini, "that this affair terminated amicably. I trust that the future will prove, that the Almighty, after having exercised mercy towards this unfortunate sinner, has also particular graces in reserve for this perfidious and benighted nation, which I hope, is destined to receive the light of the gospel. Should any fathers be named to this mission, I should be too happy to be of their number."

To whom are the Black-Feet indebted for a change so consoling, both to religion and humanity? Next to Almighty God, we may safely say, they owe it to the admirable conduct of the Flat-Heads, especially since the residence of the missionaries among the tribe. Some remarkable instances of virtue were exhibited during the hunting season.

On quitting St. Mary's our pious neophytes added some short invocations to their morning and evening prayers; 1, to the Heart of Jesus, as protector of the men's confraternity; 2, to the blessed Virgin, patroness of the women's sodality; 3, to St. Michael, model of the brave; [398] 4, to St. Raphael, the guide of travellers; 5, to St. Hubert, the patron of hunters; 6, to St. Francis Xavier, for the conversion of idolaters. We shall see, that these pious aspirations were not addressed to Heaven in vain.

The eve preceding the anniversary of St. Francis Xavier's canonization, the missionary administered baptism to a Black-Foot, whose example induced many others to solicit the like favor. The reception of the holy sacraments of penance and eucharist, was very frequent. There were 430 confessions, (children included), 350 communions, 103 of which took place the last Sunday. Only one person was left, in the camp; he having recently made his first communion, did not renew it during the chase;



whereas, his companions approached two or three times, and some, even more frequently. The pious practice of saying the Angelus, reciting the Rosary, and singing canticles, was maintained throughout the camp. The chiefs displayed their zeal for every species of good; an unalterable patience was the distinguishing virtue of all, and this is saying much, if we consider the trials attending the hunting season. Their resignation to the Divine will, was strongly manifested. During twenty-four days they had [399] been toiling onwards, undergoing much suffering from a rigorous abstinence, when the news was spread that a herd of buffaloes had been seen in the environs. The Indians repaired thither, but it was to encounter a keen disappointment. Thus, the poor Flat-Heads found themselves constrained either to fast or seek food in the country of the Black-Foot. As their horses were in a better condition than those of the other tribes, they resolved to risk the dangerous expedient. Four days they traversed heights and floods: the weather was cold and snow lay on the ground; no animals were to be seen. At last, on Wednesday in Ember-week the missionary warned his little flock that the moment was propitious for addressing Heaven to implore the goods of earth; but, he added: "if you wish the Divine bounty to shed on you His gifts, you must promise not to abuse them." His words were attended to with deep emotion, and each savage, according to the Indian expression, "Arranged his heart and began to pray." The next morning, (Thursday), herds of cattle were seen in the neighborhood; and on Friday and Saturday so many were killed that their great number encumbered the lodges.

Already was the camp on its homeward [400] march, when, 12th March, the chief, reaching the top of a mountain which commanded an extensive view of the plain, suddenly stopped — and after gazing fixedly for some time,

discovered moving objects at the verge of the horizon. At first, those around him imagined they saw buffaloes; next, they fancied they could discover a herd of deer; the final conclusion was, that an armed party of Black-Foot rapidly approached them. What was to be done? Victor, the chief, lost nothing of his usual presence of mind. He calmly quitted the head of the camp, mounted his horse, and making the animal perform a few evolutions, he was instantly surrounded by the bravest of his band. Isaac proposed prayer.—Victor exclaimed: "Let us wait until the Black-Foot show themselves yonder." Saying these words, he pointed out a second mountain which concealed us. Never had any position offered more advantages. The Black-Foot were climbing the opposite side—they were already fatigued. Between the mountain and the chain which crowned the horizon extended an immense plain, without either tree, ravine or river that could offer them the least rampart. They were but thirty-seven in number, newly exercised in arms, and on foot. The Flat-Heads, on [401] the contrary, were on horseback, numbered fifty, in the flower of age, all well armed and conducted by chieftains whose shadow would put to flight more enemies than were now approaching. Besides, Victor was at their head; he who had never been conquered, and what is more, not even wounded, though six different times he had been encompassed by the Black-Foot. The marked protection of Heaven had thus manifested itself in his favor!

The enemy, then, could not escape them. All eyes were strained towards the spot indicated by the chief, expecting the approach of the foe. Victor judges that there is "*periculum in mora*;" he casts a smiling look on the missionary, raises his fire-arms, utters a yell, urges on his steed, and flies to the combat, followed by the bravest of the land. Perceiv-

ing their approach, the Black-Feet took to flight, casting away all that embarrassed them; but beholding themselves hemmed in on all sides, they endeavoured to rally; the Flat-Heads hasten towards them; Victor's horse having been lately wounded, Fidele, Ambrose, Isaac, Ferdinand, and Emanuel, passed their chief, and arrived first in front of the enemy. Fidele spoke not; but his warrior name, signifying *Thunderbolt*, sufficiently [402] declared his courage. Ambrose announced him by that title, which causes the Black-Feet to turn pale, and added, in a terrible voice: "Fire not! If you fire you are dead men!" God spoke by his lips. Instead of firing, one of the Black-Feet threw down his gun, whilst several others extended their arms, in a supplicating attitude. The brave Ambrose refused not the pardon his enemies solicited; for true courage will never bathe itself in the blood of a conquered foe, who appeals for mercy, and whose conversion has been begged of Heaven. The generous warrior willingly extends his hand to the foe; and *all*, imitating his example, show that clemency has conquered. At this happy moment, when such Christian sentiments pervaded every heart, the *Black-gown* advanced, and the conquered foes offered him their hands, and, spreading a buffalo-skin on the snow, invited him to seat himself, and receive the honors of the calumet. Whilst the smoke of peace ascended towards heaven, presents were offered, and received, on both sides. The oldest of the Black-Feet band, seated on the left of the missionary, presented him a pair of Indian moccasins, and, strange to say, they were embroidered, with a blue cross standing out conspicuously [403] from the surrounding work. The poor idolater! did he, at that moment, think of the "*quam speciosi pades?*" Most probably not; but, it is certain, he remarked the pleasure caused by his present, and felt an assurance, from the manner in which

it was received, that, henceforward, all hearts would be united.

The Flat-Head camp set out on their return. The thirty-seven Black-Feet followed them. The thawing of the snow rendered the roads exceedingly bad, and the kind-hearted Flat-Heads, compassionating the fate of their new friends, did all they could to help them on their journey. Before separating, Victor conducted the principal Black-Feet into the missionary's lodge, that he might witness their parting good friends; and, during half an hour, every thing was said that could strengthen the new-formed friendship between the tribes. The Black-Feet told us, that for some time past they had been expecting a Black-gown, and that, when he should come among them, he would be well received; that, henceforth, they and the Flat-Heads would live like brothers; "that the prayer of the Flat-Heads should be theirs." And, although the sun had set, they assisted at prayers; after which, [404] they exchanged some tokens of friendship, and left, declaring that they were going to persuade their village to act as they had done.

The 19th March, feast of St. Joseph, seven days after the pardon so generously granted the Black-Feet, Heaven bestowed on us the fruit of our forbearance in the amicable visit of the grand chief of the "Petite Robe, Itchetles Melakas — or the three crows." All the chiefs smoked with him under the missionary's tent. Ambrose explained to him the Catholic Tree; Victor invited him to pass the night in his lodge. Such attention completely gained his heart; and the next morning the Black-Foot communicated to the missionary the resolution he had formed of soliciting the admission of his twenty-eight lodges among the Flat-Head tribe; and that he would repair to the village of St. Mary's for that purpose, towards the decline of the present moon.

During the night of the 19th some of the Black-Foot, belonging to a distant tribe, stole into the camp of the Flat-Heads and carried off five horses; but one of the robbers fell, pierced with balls, and two strokes of the knife. It would be difficult to describe the horrors of that night! the [405] savage yells, mingled with the sound of thunder, and report of musketry. The miserable desperado, by the lightning's glare, could be perceived on the ground, streaming torrents of blood from his wounds, and his unhappy soul about to quit the agonizing body, to find in eternity the chastisement due to its crimes. What else could the minister of God do, in such a circumstance, but pray the Father of Mercy to perform a miracle of grace in favor of the criminal.

The Flat-Heads have abolished the barbarous custom of reeking their vengeance on the mutilated body of their enemy. They even carry their generosity so far, as to give sepulture to all who die among them. The robber owed his grave to the bravest of the Flat-Heads, the chief of a numerous family, and the adopted father of two children, whom the Black-Foot have rendered orphans.

The following day offered nothing remarkable, if I except the many proofs of solid virtue displayed by the camp. To afford them pleasure, the missionary amused himself in his leisure hours tracing with a pen several historical facts, drawn from their annals, and suited to [406] their tastes; such as, march of the camp, divers occupations, labors of the chase, feats of arms, singular tragic scenes, religious ceremonies, &c., &c. It would be difficult to relate the pleasure this little collection gave them; and, what is still better, it contributed powerfully to raise the authority of the chieftains in the estimation of the young men, and to excite in them a noble emulation in the practice of good; for experience has clearly proved, both in civilized and uncivilized society, that this quality

is not only a stimulus to noble actions, but a greater preventive of evil, than all chastisements united.

Human ingenuity is useful, but it can do little towards the salvation of souls, if it be not joined to fervent prayer. Every missionary should be convinced of this truth. Our pious neophytes have experienced the efficacy of frequent recourse to Heaven. Each day they had invoked the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and the Holy Heart of Mary; and the first Friday and Saturday of March proved the most successful hunting days. We had invoked the patron of hunters, and our chase was relatively fortunate. We had implored the protection of the glorious St. Michael, and never did our chiefs display greater valor [407] in the presence of the enemy. We had entreated the Apostle of the Indies to obtain the conversion of the Indians, and one party of Black-Foot falls under our power, whilst the other amicably visits us, and departs, exclaiming, "The prayer of the Flat-Heads shall be ours." In fine, we had taken St. Raphael as our guide; our journey was long, fatiguing, and perilous, nevertheless, no serious accident occurred, though we often fell on the ice and rocks. Not a hunter in our camp was there who did not remark this manifest protection; and nearly all testified their gratitude to God by a fervent communion.

On Passion Sunday one hundred and three approached the holy table. The evening of so happy a day was crowned by the erection of a cross, to which they gave the name of Eugene, because the previous evening a quiver of that excellent Flat-Head, and a letter written on a piece of skin, after the Indian fashion, apprised us that he had been massacred in the neighborhood by a party of Banax. We then remembered, with consolation, that, on Ash Wednesday, a few days before his death, he came to see us, and during his stay received the holy communion.



[408] Thus, all seemed to concur, even this death, in causing us to bless the Divine Bounty which ever watches with paternal care, to supply the necessities of his confiding children.

AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM

## OUR FATHER, IN THE FLAT-HEAD AND PEND-D'OREILLE LANGUAGE

---

### THE SIGN OF + THE CROSS

Skwest kyle-e-ou, Ouls kezees, Ouls Saint Pagpagt.  
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Komicetzegail.  
May it be so.

Kyle-e-ou Itchitchemask, askwest kowâkshamenshem,  
a-i-letzemilkou

Our Father of heaven, may thy name be respected  
every where

ye-eltskyloog. Entziezie telletzia spoe-oez. Assintails ye-elstoloog  
etzageél

on the earth. May thou be master of all hearts. May thy will be done on  
earth as it is

Itchitchemask. Kóogwitzelt yettilgwa lokaitsiapetzinem.  
in heaven. Give us this day all our wants.

Kowaeksméemillem klotaiye kloistskwen etzageel kaitskolgwélem  
Forgive us the evil we have done as we forgive

klotaye kloistskwen klielskyloeg koayalokshilem takaekskwentem  
the evil done unto us by others. Grant us thy help to avoid

klotaye kowaeksgwéeltem klotaye. Komicêtzegail.  
evil but deliver us from evil. May it be so.

---

## OUR FATHER, IN THE FLAT-BOW AND KOETENAY LANGUAGE

Akikliai Stailoe, Akaltes, Saint Kilkiltlui.  
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Schaeykiakakaaike.  
May it be so.

Katitoe naitle naite, akiklinais zedabitskinne wilkane.  
Our Father, who art in heaven, may thy name be great and honoured.

Ninshalinne oshemake kapaik akaitlainam.  
Be thou the master of all hearts.

Inshazetluité younoamake yekakaekinaite  
May thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Komnakaike logenie niggenawaishne naiosaem miaitéke  
Grant us this day all our wants.

Kekepaime nekoetjekoetleaitle ixzeai,  
Forgive us all the evil we have done

Iyakiakakaaïke iyazeaïkinawash kokakipaimenaitle.  
as we forgive all the evil done unto us.

Amatikezawêsh itchkestshimmekakkowêlle akatakzen.  
Strengthen us against all evil, and deliver us from it.

Shaeykiakakaaïke.  
May it be so.

## OUR FATHER, IN THE ASSINIBOIN LANGUAGE

Tnchiachttoobe machpiachta yaeoenshi ba-eninshi  
Our Father heaven who art there let it

nabishi nietshalzilzi, Nitanwiadezi, ektyyaegnizi,  
be great, thy name, thy kingdom come,

yetshoeszizi aittshaiszi lenmachkoetzizi asêettshaiszi machtpiachta  
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,

Tnkoem nangaah oezoezandie innimbechain,  
give us this day the means of life,

eziyakink taniôzeni etchoengoebezie sinkimbishnitshaa ektaes  
look over our evil doings as we look over those who do

etchoengoebezie.  
evil unto us.

Yuoechtontjen tanniaesni etchoem goebishniet tchain,  
Guide us that we not fall into evil,

napéen giettsioenn ingninnaegé. Eetchees.  
and drive off all evil from us. Amen.

## OUR FATHER, IN THE CREE LANGUAGE

Eokosisit mina, ewiotawit mina, emiosit manito, owigowionik.  
Him who has a Son, him who has a Father, him who is the beautiful Spirit,  
in his name.

Pitone Ekeesiikik.  
May it be so.

Notanan kitsi kijikok epian pitone mewaitsikatek kiwigowin, pitone  
 Our Father in the great heaven being seated, may it be honoured thy name, may it  
 otitamomakad kitibeitsikewin, ispits enatota kawigan kitsi kisikok,  
 arrive thy kingdom (reign) like thee being followed in the great heaven,  
 pitone ekusi iji waskitaskamik. Anots kakijikak miinânipakweji  
 may it be the same on earth. Now in this day give us our  
 ganiminan mina latwaw kigigake. Canisi kaiji kasenamawayakik  
 bread and in every day. As we have remitted to those  
 ka ki matsitota koyankik ekusi iji kasinamawinan eki  
 who to us have done evil so likewise remit unto us what we  
 matsitotamank. Pisiskeiminan kitsi eka matsi mamitoueitamank  
 have done evil. Be merciful to us that we fall not into evil,  
 iekatenamawinan kamayatok. Pitone Ekeesiikik.  
 keep away from us all what is evil. May it be so.

---

## OUR FATHER, IN THE BLACK-FOOT LANGUAGE

Kikanâtzeniekasin ochkoeye tokakisint  
 Of the Father in his name, of the Son, of the Holy Spirit.

Kamoemanigtoep.  
 May it be so.

Kinanâ spoegsts tzittâpigpi, kitzinnekazen kagkakomimokzin.  
 Our Father in heaven who art, thy name, may it be holy.

Nagkitapiwatog neto kinyokizip.  
 Thy reign may it arrive.

Kitizizigtaen nejakapestoeta tzagkom, nietziewae spoegsts.  
 Thy will, may it be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Ikogkiowa ennoch matogkwitapi.  
 All we need, this day unto us grant.

Istapikistomokit nagzikamoót komonetziewae nistowâ  
 Forgive the evil we have done as we pardon the wrong we have received,

Nagkezis tapi kestemoóg.  
 Help us against sin.

Spemmoók matéakoziep makapi  
 From all what is evil deliver us.

Kamoemanigtoep.  
 May it be so.

---

## OUR FATHER, IN THE POTAWOTOMIE LANGUAGE

+ TCHIBIATIKONIKWIN — sign of the Cross.

Olinosowinig Weosimit, ipi Wekwissimit, ipi menojuwepisit

Mennito.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Ape iw nomikug.

Amen.

### Nosinan — OUR FATHER.

Nosinan Wakwik ebiyin ape kitchitwa kitchilwa wenitamag  
kitinosowin, enakosiyin ape piyak kitewetako tipu wakwig, ape  
tepwetakon chote kig. Ngom ekijikiwog michinag mamitchiyak  
ponigetedwichinag kego kachi kichiinakineyi ponigeledwoiket  
woye kego kachi kichiimidgin, kinamochinag wapatadiyak.  
Chitchiikwan nenimochinag meyanek waotichkakoyakin.

Ape iw nomikug.

### VOCABULARY

ENGLISH.	FLAT-HEAD.	BLACK-FOOT.	CREE.	CREE.
Hair	Komike	Notakane	Nistika-â	1 Péak
Forehead	Tchilchemaiche	Nonissi	Miskatek	2 Nizo
Nose	Spezâeks	Nopisis	Niskiwen	3 Nisto
Mouth	Spelimetzim	Naoji	Tapisken	4 Nêou
Teeth	Galaig	Nogpikiêt	Nepita	5 Nianen
Tongue	Taigoetzetze	Naetzinni	Daini	6 Koutonazek
Cheeks	Shilkzemoos	Nozippinain	Nanawai	7 Têpeko
Ears	Caine	Nogtokie	Nigtawake	8 Enanéô
Chin	Koiaipais	Nogpiskinny	Gwaeskonêou	9 Tégametata
Neck	Tchesspin	Nogkokinne	Nikwayo	10 Mitâtat
Arms	Stitchewagen	Notezisê	Nespton	
Elbow	Zintchenposka	Nogkinnetsis	Dossken	ASSINIBOIN.
Shoulder	Lintchemilkoy	Nogkazikkiê	Digtiman	1 Kâtcheêt
Hand	Tchails	Nogkiziâiks	Tzigtshie	2 Num
Fingers	Stagtig	Tommakiotketzis	Nemezittzi-	3 Yamine
Belly	Olin	Nokoen	schân	4 Tonzâ
Back-bone	Zintshametchin	Nogtazistkin		5 Zapita
Thighs	Zintzemoostche	Noketokezinnen		6 Shâgape
Knees	Tcoemmekaisne	Noketokeziss		7 Shayoen
Legs	Titchemaekshen	Nieziekzinnen		8 Shagnoge
Feet	Tzotchin	Nietzigzip		9 Namtchoeank
Lips	Speliêmetzin	Notoinish	Ndon	10 Wi-ink
Eyes	Stitchekoetkoltloest	Nowaaps	Niskisick	Chemine

PLANTS OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN FLOWER IN  
AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER,

*Of which the botanical names follow:*

- |                            |                            |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Helenium                | 15. Sedum Stenopetalum     |
| 2. Sabbatia Angularis      | 16. Prunus Duerinckii      |
| 3. Spigelia Marylandica    | 17. Cantua Aggregata       |
| 4. Geum Geniculatum        | 18. Rudbeckia Purpurea     |
| 5. Rudbeckia Composita     | 19. Actinomeris Squarrosa  |
| 6. Euchroma Coccinea       | 20. Cardamine Bellidifolia |
| 7. Asters Coccineus        | 21. Houstonia Longiflora   |
| 8. Ilex Ligustrifolia      | 22. Melanthium Monoicum    |
| 9. Convallaria Stellata    | 23. Liatris Brachystachya  |
| 10. Chrysanthemum Arcticum | 24. Rhexia Mariana         |
| 11. Aronia Amifolia        | 25. Claytonia Spathulata   |
| 12. Polymnia Uvedelia      | 26. Aquilegia Formosa      |
| 13. Fraxinea Caroliniensis | 27. Campanula Divaricata   |
| 14. Ophrys, Malaxis        |                            |





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By

JOHN W. AUDUBON

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*Edited by*

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JOHN W. AUDUBON, son of the famous ornithologist, was a member of Colonel Webb's California Expedition which started from New York City for the gold-fields in February, 1849. The Journal consists of careful notes which Audubon made en route. It was written with a view to publication, accompanied by a series of sketches made at intervals during the journey; but owing to Audubon's pre-occupation with other affairs, the plan of publication was never realized.

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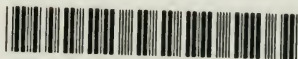
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